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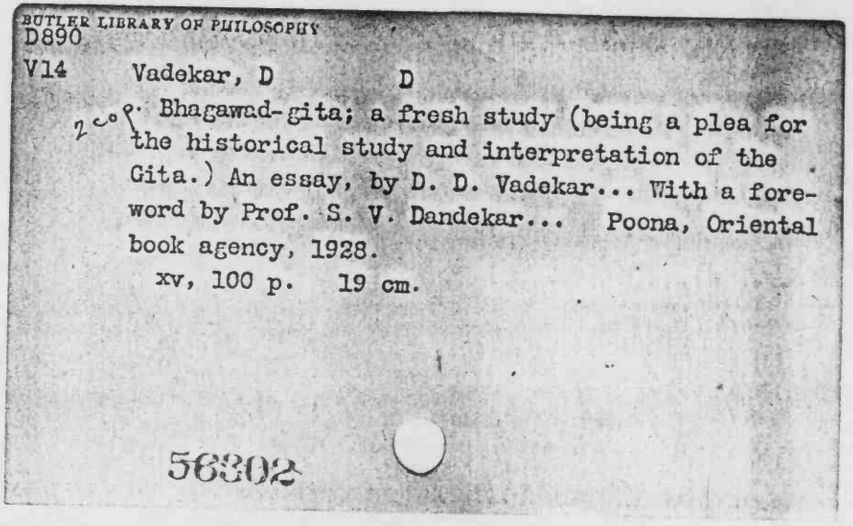
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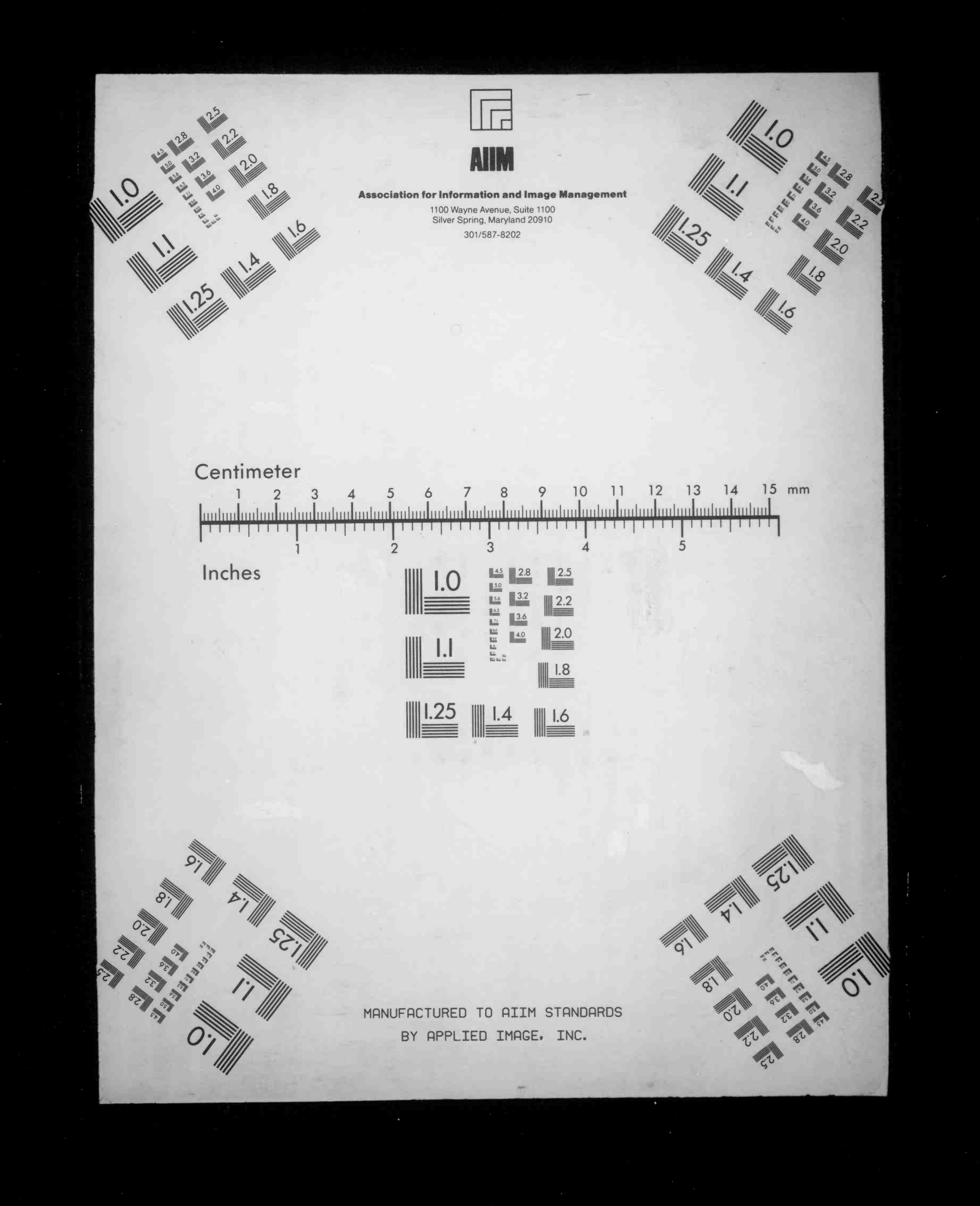
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A FRESH STUDY

D. D. VADEKAR, M. A.

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BHAGAWAD-GITA

A FRESH STUDY

(Being a Plea for the Historical Study and Interpretation of the Gita.)

AN ESSAY

BY

D. D. VADEKAR, M. A.,

Assistant Professor of Philosophy,
Rajaram College, Kolhapur (S.M.C.),

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

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To My Parents

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PREFACE

It was not without some diffidence and even hesitation that I at first decided to publish this Essay. When so many books on the Gītā are already in the field and when probably no aspect of the Gītā Philosophy has remained undetected or unemphasized at the hands of the many scholars and philosophers who have bestowed their best attention and study on that work, it would seem presumption on my part to increase the bulk of the already unmanageable mass of literature on it by an addition thereto, let it be never so little, of another book. I am conscious of this implied presumption. And yet I have thought it desirable on the whole to put before my readers the results of some attention and study that I in my own turn have been able to devote to the Gītā.

The motive is a two-fold one. I venture to believe that my Essay on the Gītā has at least some merit of the freshness of treatment in it, though I cannot say there is any strict originality in it. And if, further, I have considered this aspect of it as worthy of my reader's attention, it is only because I came to think after some deliberation that too much shrinking from criticism is no good. In fact, criticism is the only human pathway to truth and we must welcome it in all earnestness and humility.

This Essay is mainly the outcome of my tenure of a Research Fellowship at the Philosophical Institute of Amalner (East Khandesh). While working there on the Gītā, I had tentatively chosen " Gītā in Terms of the Western Philosophy " as the title for my Essay, but with the progress of my studies in the Gītā, the whole subject so shaped itself in my mind as to induce me to give to it

its present title. But even for that, I believe some traces of my original intention are still present in the dissertation as it now appears in print.

I have called this Essay "a plea for the *historical* study and interpretation of the Gītā." I came to realise the need of adopting such a method by my philosophical studies in Western thought with which I was till some time ago almost wholly occupied. And since then I have always considered a student with an initial training in the methodology of the Western Philosophy to be specially qualified to undertake in its light the most necessary and desirable task of an inward gaze,—I mean the task of an interpretation and examination of our own philosophy. This Essay is a tentative sketch of the lines on which I think it is possible to write a comprehensive and an exhaustive book on the Gītā Philosophy thoroughly modern in its outlook and in its touch with the living issues of to-day's philosophy.

Of the older writers on the Gītā, few, if any, have shown in their interpretations the historical sense that I contend must be at the basis of every such interpretation. Of the modern writers, I have found Mr. C. V. Vaidya's brilliant appendix on the "Life and Teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa" in his "Epic India" highly suggestive and I am conscious of the great encouraging stimulus that I have derived from it. Tilak is another of the greater writers on the Gītā who has appreciated the value of the historical setting or the context of that work in its interpretation. But it is to be regretted that he did not think of extending this same contextual argument to the *philosophical*, as distinguished from other precedents of the Gītā and he emphasized only the politico-literary context of that poem in the Mahābhārata. My Essay contends that the

true and distinctive philosophical significance of the Gītā can only be brought out against the background of its *philosophical*, more than any other, precedents. Of the more recent writings, Professor Radhakrishnan's chapter on the Gītā is the most illuminating and in virtue of its candid recognition of the solidarity of the Gītā Philosophy is, so far as I know, the only treatment of it on the right lines. I have also found the works of Tattavabhushan, Ghose and Kurtakoti useful in their own ways. I am indebted to all these writers as well as others mentioned in one of the appendices, as I have freely drawn upon them.

I have accused Śaṅkara and Tilak of forcing their own views on the Gītā. I wonder if a similar charge may not rebound against my own attempt. For myself I can only say that I have tried as far as possible not to deserve such an allegation. It is for my readers to see if and how for I have succeeded in the attempt.

The strong critical strain against Śaṅkara and Tilak in this book perhaps needs a word of explanation. This is meant primarily for the sake of clearness and emphasis, rather than any literal or strict condemnation of these two brilliant Hindu Metaphysicians. The formal adoption of the Hegelian formula of Development is also likewise meant for giving the whole thing a certain definiteness of treatment and may not be taken to imply, on the writer's part, a whole-hearted subscription to that doctrine of Hegel.

Before this Essay was written, an article embodying the main contentions of it was contributed to a Bombay Monthly and since then the subject has been presented in the form of lectures to the Philosophical Associations of the New Poona and Rajaram Colleges. The MS also was

submitted to certain persons whose judgments I respect and those of these who cared to look into it advised me to send it to the Press. I have to thank them for this encouragement given to me. I must also thank Professor Malkani, the Head of the Philosophical Institute of Amalner for having granted me the permission to publish this booklet, as otherwise it was solely the property of the Institute. I am also obliged to Professor Dandekar of the New Poona College for the foreward that he has contributed to this Essay. Above all, I must express my deep gratitude to my brother, Mr. R. D. Vadekar. M. A, for all the encouragement and help that he has given me in this connection. In fact but for his encouragement, this Essay perhaps would not have seen the light of the day! Nor must I forget to thank the management of the Aryabhushan Press who have done the printing of the book in so short a time.

Rajaram College,
Kolhapur (S. M. C.)
March 1, 1928

D. D. VADEKAR

A FOREWORD

I have been asked by my friend Prof. Vadekar to say a few words by way of preface to this fresh study of the Bhagvad-Gītā, India's favourite Bible. Ever since the day the Gītā teachings have assumed this perceptible form, they have been the object of reverent worship and commentation. Though the Gitā forms a part of the great epic, it has assumed such an independent position, that we might say that there is no period of Renaissance in Hinduism—let it be of Logical Intellectualism of Śaṅkara, Devotional Intellectualism of Rāmānuja, Intellectual Mysticism of Jñānadeva or Intellectual Practicalism of Tilak—that has not synchronized with a fresh interpretation or a fresh commentary on the Bhagvad-Gītā. With what Nietzsche calls a fresh trans-valuation of values, a fresh attempt is usually made to reinterpret the holy texts so as to obtain textual authority for new values. It is, therefore, not unnatural that new interpretations should arise when India is passing through the wave of Renaissance caused by the political and cultural association with the West, especially with the Western methods of thought.

It is a sign of times that new histories of Indian Philosophy are being written by Indians. As Prof. Vadekar rightly puts it,—"the age of translations and adaptations is over and the age of interpretation has begun." It is therefore in the fitness of things that Indian intellects trained in the discipline of new Western methods should naturally turn to their own philosophy to understand and represent its true value. A Max Müller may write a "Six Systems of Indian Philosophy" or a Grierson or an Edgerton may write a tractate on this or that section

of Indian Philosophy. But a true history of Indian Philosophy will be the work of an Indian who has imbibed the true spirit of his country's thought and whose intellect is trained in the modern Western methods. Every Indian student of philosophy has thus a maternal debt to be discharged. And I congratulate my friend Prof. Vadekar for taking an early opportunity to discharge it in howsoever small a measure it might be.

The principal value of this fresh study of the Bhagvad-Gītā consists in the use of the Developmental Method that is made therein. The old commentators looked at a literary work more or less as a thing complete in itself. But the historical method takes a broader view of the thing and regards every work as one link in the long chain of past, present and future. It tries to grasp the whole of the context in which an event is interwoven warp and woof. "The historic method enables us to trace the growth of an idea from its genesis, to eliminate accidental accretions and reach the kernel of fact underlying it." It is this method, therefore, that can be regarded as the surest antidote to what is known as the psychologists' fallacy often made in the work of interpretation. Prof. Vadekar takes his stand upon this sure way of getting at truth.

Prof. Vadekar begins his work by showing how the previous commentators were not able to get at the truth. And for this destructive work, he has rightly chosen the two types—Śaṅkara and Tilak, the former of sectarianism, the latter of modern criticism. "The history of this work" he observes, "had been one of sectarian exploitation." And as a type of this he has chosen that stalwat expounder of Brahmanism, Śaṅkara. According to Prof. Vadekar "Neither textual interpretation nor philosophical grounds favoured Śaṅkara's views." The Gītā is presumably a work on ethics and Māyā doctrine with which Śaṅkara's

name is so indissolubly connected is inconsistent with anything like a serious morality. Thus there is an inherent doctrinal contradiction between the Māyāvāda of which Śaṅkara is the champion and morality proper. Moreover according to Prof. Vadekar, his interpretation is not borne out by the text of the Gītā. His interpretation, therefore, according to him is hopelessly wrong, is beyond improvement.

With the late Mr. Tilak, the case is otherwise. He rightly lays his finger upon the historical method and tries to look at it as a part of the Mahābhārata and as an event which is a part of larger events. According to Tilak, a careful study of the context in which the Gītā was told and of the introductory and concluding portions of the Gītā is in itself sufficient to show that the Gītā is not purely a metaphysical discussion, but is essentially an ethical treatise that bases its discussions on a sure foundation of sound spiritualistic metaphysics. Hence the book is spoken of as Karmayoga-Śāstra or "Science and Philosophy of Activism." In the eyes of Prof. Vadekar, a part and perhaps the principal part of his interpretation is correct. Only unfortunately he makes an unholy alliance with Māyāvāda or Negativistic Metaphysics and thus introduces in his otherwise correct view a doctrinal error of putting together two things that are fundamentally inconsistent. As Prof. Wadekar puts it—"A metaphysical staticism is an insecure basis for ethical dynamism."

Having shown the inadequacies in the two representative types he gives his own interpretation. The Gītā is definitely a Karmayoga-Śāstra that preaches Eudæmonism or the Ethics of complete Personality based upon conserving metaphysics, Personality being defined as the possession of knowledge, purpose and love in some sense. This interpretation is consistent internally and externally and

hence is acceptable. In Appendix No. 1 a table for ready reference is given that makes all positions quite clear. The fourth Chapter of the First Part is the constructive chapter that very briefly summarises the results of the application of the historical method to the Gītā Teachings. In his developmental survey Prof. Vadekar starts with the Thesis in the form of Theological Pluralism with a practical Hedonism of the Vedic period. An anti-thesis was affirmed according to him by the Upanishads in their metaphysical Singularism with a Philosophical Asceticism. And as the serpent recoils, the truth also recoiled in a synthesis made by the Bhagvad-Gītā in the form of Cosmism or Axiological idealism with Eudæmonism (Activism and Quietism). Of course the synthesis talked of here is not what the author of "The Rambles in Vedānta" expressed when he said that the strings of the Vīṇā tuned to one key do not produce a more melodious voice or the several limbs in the human body do not work more harmoniously than the several doctrines Sāṁkhya, Bhakti, Karma and Knowledge work peacefully and harmoniously together in the Gītā. The synthesis for the perception and assertion of which Prof. Vadekar regards the Gītā as the gem in the Indian Philosophy is a Hegelian synthesis. To briefly express his interpretation it might be said that it is a synthesis of Rāmānuja's Qualified Monism and Tilak's Activism. Appendix No. 2 gives a table of prospect and retrospect. Part II Chapters V and VI detail by quoting references from the text and discussing minor issues how the Gītā is a Synthesis of Axiological Metaphysics, and Eudæmonistic Ethics.

The issues that can be well framed in this case will be something like the following :—

(1) Is Gītā principally a Karmayoga-Śāstra (an ethical treatise) or an Adhyātma-śāstra (a book of spiritual life) ?

(2) What is the exact sense of these two terms or better, what is the exact sense in which they have been used by various interpreters ?

(3) As is made out, is there a real wide gulf between the two ?

(4) If the two are diametrically opposed and the Gītā is a Karmayoga-Śāstra, what metaphysical grounding has it preached and is it consistent with the ethical ideal upheld ?

(5) Is there a doctrinal contradiction between Māyāvāda and ethics proper ?

(6) Should we try to interpret the metaphysical basis of the Gītā so as to suit the ethical position maintained ?

(7) Or is it possible that having a higher perspective of its own the Gītā itself may bear out what appears to us on this plane as an illogical position ?

Prof. Vadekar's interpetation of this sacred book is original. He has brought to bear upon his interpretation of the Gītā Teachings all that the best study of Western Philosophy could give him. He has also made a careful study of the various ancient as well as modern treatises on the Bhagvad-gītā and made use of them in forming his own conclusions.

To the issues framed above, therefore the reader will find in this small book answers either expressed or implied. The Gītā is infinitely rich in its suggestions. The Gītā, like its author, is infinite, an expression of life itself that is so very complex and many-sided. It is therefore but natural, that any author old or new may present views, on every one of which it is possible to strike a dissentient note. For instance, in this study, also, it is possible to doubt the conclusions arrived at by Prof. Vadekar regard-

ing Gita e. g. views on the relation of the Individual Soul to God, Parā-Prakṛti the interpretation of Śaṅkara's Pantheism, the criterion of यद् यद् विभूतिमत् (x.41) proposed, or to take points of smaller importance, the date of the Gītā or the meaning of the word Soma. Moreover it might be said that it is unfortunate that in this interpretation Prof. Vadekar has relied too much on the Hegelian Law of Development by contradiction. Even after admitting the value of the method of development in the explanation of facts, it might be said that the value of the results so obtained would depend upon the impartiality observed in the revelation of history itself. Hegel's method, it has been truly said, is a method of representation of facts already discovered than a method of evolving truth. And it is with this method that Prof. Vadekar works. But the value of a book like this consists more in the suggestions it makes, in the potentialities that it shows than in the actual results presented.

There are three outstanding merits of this work. First, Prof. Vadekar rightly lays his finger upon the synthetical character of the Gītā. In synthesis, one is always sure to find a greater truth than in abstractions, though it must be remembered at the same time, that all syntheses are not equally great and that the value of a sythesis depends materially upon the nature of two moments harmonized.

The second merit of the work is that herein are given for comparison several views of Western thinkers modern as well as contemporary so that a reader might well judge for himself the true value of results arrived at in India when the Westerners were simply groping in the dark.

The third and the principal merit of this book consists in the application of the Historical Method. What Aristotle said of man can be truly said of truth that it is also

a political being. It is not suddenly dropped from the heavens. It is in a sense a growth and therefore the best way to understand it truly is not to abstract it from the polity but to take it as a whole with all its relations to the several members of the polity. This will be truly evaluating it. Such a method, whose claim is nowhere disputed now in the West is applied in this study by Prof. Vadekar and that is the greatest merit of the work.

I gladly recommend to readers of the Gītā this little study that promises so much.

New Poona College
Hostel, Poona.
23-2-1928.

S. V. DANDEKAR, M. A.,
Professor of Philosophy.

"The ideal of the Devotee of the Gītā is one in whom love is lighted up by knowledge and bursts forth into a fierce desire to suffer for mankind."

—PROF. RADHAKRISHNAN

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

A FRESH STUDY

PART I

CHAPTER I

Introductory

1

Translation vs. Interpretation.

Western Philosophy has been studied in India now for many years, and the students of philosophy in the West are also being attracted more and more towards Indian Philosophy. But till very recently, the study of Indian Philosophy by the Westerners consisted mainly in what virtually amounted to mere *translations* and *adaptations* of the ancient works on philosophy in India. Much the same has also been true about the study of Western Philosophy by Indians. It is a good omen, therefore, in the interest of a cultural meeting of the East and the West, that in modern times there has arisen a number of scholars and philosophers both in India and in Europe who have realised the need of and have been working for an *interpretation* of the philosophies of the East and the West in terms of each other. The Age of Translations and Adaptations has gone and the Age of Interpretation has now dawned and let us hope that the East and the West will meet in a philosophical commonwealth and will march together hand-in-hand for the moral and spiritual perfection of humanity.

2

The Purpose of this Essay.

The specific purpose of this Essay is to venture an attempt at an interpretation of one important and most influential and popular work on Indian Philosophy—the "Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā." The writer of this paper personally thinks that the Gītā presents to us in its own peculiar, if a little archaic phraseology, all that the best thought of the philosophical West is striving to express to-day.

3

Some Charateristics of Indian Philosophy illustrated in the Gita.

We might conveniently begin, by way of a few introductory words, by noting a few distinctive characteristics of Indian Philosophy. Philosophy in the ultimate analysis is the same everywhere. But circumstances, such as conditions of life, a people's temperament and genius, etc. play an important part in determining its general features or distinctive charactersitics. India, especially, has been from very early times known as a land of speculation *par excellence* and its philosophy is, therefore, bound to have some distinctive features of its own which deserve our notice. And first, philosophy to Indians is never a merely secular pursuit. It is not an intellectual indulgence or luxury. Truths of philosophy are always held to have a direct bearing on our daily concrete life and it makes a whole world of difference to an Indian whether he accepts this or that line of philosophical thinking. The main interest of Indians in philosophy is always a practical one and to them, as to the Pythagoreans of the ancient Greece, philosophy meant essentially a way of life. Hence, further, the deep spirituality of Indian Philosophy. Everywhere in the philosophical literature of India, one finds

the problems of spiritual betterment and perfection discussed with a very deep concern. To a Western mind, this is not probably easily intelligible. This life, in India, is considered as if it were nought in itself. Such an attitude is only to be parallelled to that of the Pythagoreans and Socrates and perhaps Plato (in some of his dialogues) in the History of European Philosophy. Passages, for example, in Plato's "Phædo" essentially breathe an atmosphere strikingly similar to that, for example, in some of the passages of the "Gītā" and the "Upanishads." Things about the soul are discussed there with a life's concern and a sense of stake almost touching and with intense spirituality. Nor, again, do these discussions of philosophical issues ever remain, in India, the esoteric dogmas of the intellectual aristocracy of the professional philosophers ; but they pass on to and permeate the lowest strata of society through the popular sermons and compendia written for the special purpose of disseminating the spiritual truths broadcast among the people. The Great Epic of India—the Mahābhārata—and the Purāṇas are everywhere interspersed with philosophical disquisitions and allegories and these form the texts of the popular preachers to lecture on to the masses. With this same fact is also to be noted another about Indian Philosophy and that is its very vital relation with Religion. In India, the Temple is always also the Academy. Indeed, Religion and Philosophy are so allied in India that they tend altogether to be identified in the popular mind.

All these charateristics of Indian thought are admirably illustrated in the case of the Gītā. What is more, the Gītā is by far the most remarkable work of the kind, considering how within its very small compass it combines in a historic synthesis almost all the vital currents of the speculative and religious thought of ancient India. Thus

says the late B. G. Tilak in his epoch-making work on the Gītā—" Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā is verily a diamond of spotless splendour amongst our Scriptures.....It is difficult to find its equal not only in Sanskrit but also in the world literature." Truth of this remark of Tilak's, based on his more than forty years of critical study of that work can be fully realised only by a direct and first-hand study of it. But even a perusal of its contents in the translation (and it is translated in almost all the principal languages of the world) is sure to give an impressive idea of the treasures of the spirit that are offered therein to humanity in its lucid and graceful style and language.

4

Some relevant Facts about the Gita.

We proceed to relate some relevant facts about the Gītā, as they will be seen afterwards to have an important bearing on the line of interpretation to be adopted in our study of that work. Gītā is an episode in the great epic of " Mahābhārata " and is inextricably connected with its context in that work. Any attempt to isolate the Gītā from the Mahābhārata or to belittle the importance of its context is bound to be unsuccessful in the long run. In the story of the historic Mahābhārata war, Gītā has a place at a very critical juncture and purports to be a report of the conversation between the Lord Kṛishṇa and Arjuna. Arjuna began to sink within himself at the imminent sight of the bloody massacre of his kith and kin which he was going shortly to undertake in order to vindicate his own rights as well as the cause of justice. Suddenly there was a total mental collapse followed by a strong impulse to give up all activity and effort. It was the purpose of the Gītā to remove this false moral skepticism and inactivism of Arjuna and to

restore to him, by argument if necessary, his native sense of duty and rights. Accordingly at the end of the Gītā we find that the great hero of the Mahābhārata has rushed forth to the execution of his duty and the vindication of his rights,—which as historians tell us has given a definite turn to the ancient history of this land. The Gītā has thus wonderfully succeeded in its mission—which was to bring about a spiritual and moral regeneration of Arjuna. Significance of these facts for the interpretation of the Gītā will be indicated later.

Other facts about the Gītā are more or less of an antiquarian interest and need not detain us here long. The question about its date and authorship is highly controversial. As regards the authorship, suffice it to note here that though it is popularly supposed to be written by the great sage Vyāsa.—the first author of Bhārata,—still scholars have cited evidence to show that this is not a fact. Nor is it quite necessary for our purposes to ascertain who the author of this work was. We shall simply note that the work belongs to the third—or what is called the Epic—period of Sanskrit Literature, the first two being the Vedic and the Upanishadic periods respectively. That gives us also a rough idea of the date of the work, which cannot be later than about 250 B. C.

Another point which we need not emphasise too much is about the eclectic character of the Gītā. Garbe, Hopkins and other non-Indian Gītā scholars have tried to dissect by various methods the text of the Gītā and have tried to guess, each in his own way, what the " original Bhagavad-Gītā " should have been like. Garbe thinks that the Gītā was orignally an exclusive tract of Sāṁkhya-Yoga systems and that the Vedāntic references in it are all later interpolations. Hopkins thinks that it is " a Kṛishṇaite remodelling of a Vishṇuite poem which

itself was a late Upanishad." Deussen thinks that it is "a late product of the degeneration of the monistic thoughts of the Upanishads." So also Keith, Holtzmann, Barnett and others have had their own conjectures. All these are more or less based on *philological* grounds as distinguished from grounds *philosophical*. We have nothing to do with the origin and sources of the contents of the Gītā or with the adaptations and remodellings that its text underwent. We have to study Gītā as a philosophical work aud so far we must concentrate our attention on the philosophical conceptions in that work and try if necessary to examine their validity or significance. We must treat Gītā on its own merits and shall take it for what it is worth as an integral work on philosophy.

CHAPTER II

Śaṅkara on the Gītā

1

The sectarian Exploitation of the Gita.

We shall have to say here a few words as regards the general method to be adopted in the interpretation of a work like the Gītā. (In doing so, we cannot help anticipating in away the results of the application of that method to the Gītā.) In the past, the Gītā has not really been subjected to an impartial philosophical examination and interpretation. Ever since the day it was written, its history has been one of a sectarian exploitation. It has from very early times come to be recognised as an authority on matters, philosophical and religious. It is one of the three traditional Institutes—"Prasthānas"—of Hindu Philosophy, the other two being the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sūtras. Consequently, various thinkers thought it necessary, in order to secure recognition and acceptance for their own views, to seek the support of Gītā and the other time-honoured Institutes of Hindu Philosophy. They wrote commentaries on them all and tried by so doing to show that their views were also the views of the said recognised Institutes. The whole procedure is highly artificial and completely innocent of the historical sense. Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and others have tried—each in his own way—to interpret the Gītā in the light of their preconceived notions and the consequence is that they have had to manipulate and twist both the *spirit* and the *text* of the Gītā to suit their purposes. It does not fall within the scope of this

essay to examine in detail these interpretations put upon the text. But we shall here consider, by way of substantiating the above remarks, one or two interpretations as briefly as possible.

2

An Outline of Sankara's Philosophy.

Let us first take Śaṅkara's "Bhāshya" on the Gītā. In order, however, to understand how Śaṅkara reads his own interpretations in the text of the Gītā, one must know beforehand the general outline of Śaṅkara's position in metaphysics. The central conception in his philosophy is that of the Self which he reaches by a method of abstraction. The ordinary experiences of the Self are *not* of its essence and must be abstracted from it if we would reach a correct notion of the Self. " All experience " says Dr. S. N. Dasgupta in his History of Indian Philosophy, (p. 435) "starts and moves in an error which identifies the Self with the body, senses or the objects of the senses," and imposes upon it " all phenomenal qualities of pleasure, pain, etc." and " this with Śaṅkara is a beginningless illusion or 'Māyā.' " According to Śaṅkara, therefore, the Self in its ultimate truth must be conceived as " pure Being, pure Intelligence, pure Bliss." This being accepted, the world as it appears could not be real. It must be a mere magic show of illusion or *Māyā*." " For if the self is what is ultimately real (or " Brahman "), the necessary conclusion is that all else is mere illusion or Māyā." The practical consequences of such a doctrine or rather the ethical bearings of such a metaphysical doctrine are obvious. The Summum Bonum is the realisation of this ultimate nature of the Self or Brahman (—that Brahman or Self which as the highest truth is revealed in the Scriptures—) in our concrete life by a process of abstraction from whatever is non-essential to the basic nature of the

Self,—in other words, by a destruction (if it can be called destruction) of that beginningless illusion and habit which is responsible for the identification or imposition of various phenomenal qualities upon the Self. Moral life becomes a process of annihilation and the moral Ideal becomes a sort of inscrutable Void. All experience and activity being due to that besetting fallacy of identification and imposition (" Adhyāsa," as it is technically called), and pure abstract Self being the one and the sole Reality, the conceptions of moral individuality and moral responsibility become meaningless, and retiring asceticism with perfect Quietism as its goal becomes the only moral creed.

All these consequences are accepted in more or less explicit terms by Śaṅkara and his school. But these views have also to be reconciled with or referred to the Revealed Scriptures which to the orthodox philosophers of India are the highest authorities. Now the Scriptures, (for instance, the Īśopanishad and notably the Gītā, also enjoin men to do actions and to live a life not of quiet inactivitism but of Duty and Happiness. The School of Śaṅkara explain this away by saying that the latter—viz. the path of "Duty and Happiness "—is meant by the Scriptures for the lower and the unenlightened class of aspirants and to qualify them for the higher path—the path of " Knowledge and Renunciation."—which is the only *ultimate* path prescribed by the Scriptures and which leads up direct to the Summum Bonum—viz. the knowledge of the Brahman and the consequent " Moksha " or the Final Emancipation from the phenomenal. Thus, though *apparently* the Scriptures enjoin two paths—Knowledge and Action—, still in *reality*, there is only one,—i. e. the one of Knowledge—the other being merely ancillary or auxiliary (p. 436) to it. So, as Dr. Dasgupta says, " Throughout his commentary on the Gītā, Śaṅkara tried to demonstrate that those who fol-

low the injunctions of the Veda and perform Vedic deeds, such as sacrifices etc., belonged to a lower order."

3

His Explanation of the Superiority of Karma-Yoga in the Gita.

Such in outline is the metaphysical and moral philosophy of Śaṅkara which he claims also to be the philosophy of the traditional authorities of Hindu Philosophy. Now an impartial perusal of the text of the Gītā together with Śaṅkara's Bhāshya thereon reveals, in the opinion of the writer of this essay, that Śaṅkara has had frequent occasions to somehow manipulate the text of the Gītā in the service of his own doctrine and that even then Śaṅkara does not always come out successful. We shall give below only one or two instances, because more glaring, of this procedure of Śaṅkara; for the rest we refer the reader to the text of the Bhāshya itself. At the beginning of the 5th Chapter, Arjuna asks Kṛishṇa—

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥

"Oh Kṛishṇa, you praise renunciation of actions and also the pursuit (of them). Tell me determinately which one of these two is superior." (Telang's Translation, page 63, in the S. B. E. VIII.)

To which Kṛishṇa replies—

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥

"Renunciation and pursuit of actions are both instruments of Happiness. But of the two, pursuit of action is superior to renunciation of action." (Telang, loc. cit.) Telang's translation of "Niśśreyasa" as happiness is a little misleading. It does not mean happiness only; it means that peace to which Moksha or Liberation leads.

Apart from this, however, the Gītā text itself leaves nothing to be desired as regards the clearness of meaning. But Śaṅkara writes a long introduction at the beginning of the Chapter and tries to make out that the renunciation and pursuit of actions referred to in Arjuna's question and Kṛishṇa's reply were those of an unenlightened or lower class of aspirants, so that the pursuit of action, "Karma-yoga" is meant to be superior for the ignorant and not for the higher or enlightened class of aspirants for whom the other, the highest path of knowledge and no duties is meant. Says Śaṅkara—

अनात्मवित्कर्तृकयोरेव संन्यासकर्मयोगयोर्निःश्रेयस्करत्ववचनम ।

(Bhāshya, Ānandāśrama Ed. p. 182)

"It is the Saṁnyāsa and the Karmayoga of the man *who has not realised the Self* that are spoken of as leading alike to Moksha" (i. e. in the first line of the reply)."—Mahadev Shastri's Translation of Bhāshya. Again, in the introduction to the 6th verse of the same chapter, Śaṅkara has said (*ibid*, p. 188)—

मयोक्तं कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते इति **ज्ञानमनपेक्ष्य** ।

[It was] "*without having regard to knowledge,* [that] my answer has been given that Karma-yoga is superior to Karma-saṁnyāsa"—Mahadev Shastri.

A carerful comparison of the above texts and their context in the Gītā with the remarks of Śaṅkara thereon (also quoted above) convinces us that Śaṅkara is clearly misconstruing the whole passage in the interests of his own preconceived doctrine and we also see that the words underlined in the quotations of the Bhāshya are not warranted by the text at all. We have here no space to cite other instances of the like nature, but the one given above is sufficient to show how Śaṅkara's ethical interpretation of the Gītā is on a wrong line.

4

"Mayavada" in the Gita.

Much the same can be said to be the case also with his underlying metaphysic. There is no such thing as the theory of illusion or superimposition ("Māyāvāda" or "Adhyāsavāda") in the Gītā. The word *adhyāsa* does not occur in it at all and though the word "Māyā" occurs about four or five times in the text (e. g. see vii. 14, 15 ; iv. 6 ; xviii. 61), nothing can be surer than the meaning of that word there being something other than illusion. In fact Māyā has been used in the same sense as that of "Prakṛiti" i. e. matter as distinguised from form. At any rate, the word Māyā has not been given in the Gītā that cosmogonical significance, which was given to it later, as I suppose, in the system of Śaṅkara and his school. (Even "Brahman" itself is used in some places in the Gītā in the sence of Prakṛiti, e. g. see iii. 15 and iv. 3). As regards, Śaṅkara's doctrine of the ultimate and sole reality of "Brahman," we say that the doctrine no doubt is to be found in the Gītā, but there is nothing distinctively Śaṅkarite about it. And as regards the status of the Self in relation to the Absolute or Brahman, the writer of this essay thinks that Śaṅkara's views on this subject are not countenanced by the Gītā at all. A general substantiation of the latter remark may be found in the sequel.

It is not the special purpose of this essay to collect textual and other evidence in the Gītā to show that Śaṅkara's interpretation of that work is not adequate or is wrong. But let it be stated here for what it is worth, that Gītā in my opinion does not lend any *textual* countenance to Śaṅkara's interpretation. Now there are *philosophical* and other grounds also to reject Śaṅkara's interpretation. His philosophy as a whole may be characterised as

a system of Ascetico-quietistic or *inactivistic* Ethics based on a system of Acosmistico-absolutist or *negetivistic* Metaphysics.* Now, can we suppose that Gītā was meant to give the exposition of these views ?

5.

The Upakrama and the Upasamhara.

At least the beginning and the end--the Upakrama and the Upasaṁhāra—of the poem plainly contradict such views. The Kṛishṇa of the Gītā was a man of action and so was the Prince Arjuna for whom it was meant. The origin of the Gītā lies in the outburst or fit of passions and feelings which clouded the mind of Arjuna and made it difficult for him to concentrate on his imminent Duty. One may recall to one's mind what has been said in i. 28 ff, up to ii. 9--where Kṛishṇa begins the exposition of his deeper philosophy. Particularly the following verses are important—

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ (i. 47)

or

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ (ii. 7)

"Having spoken thus, Arjuna cast aside his bow together with the arrows, on the battefield, and sat down in

* Compare—"The method of Vedānta thus followed is on the one side the method of Śūnyavāda in annulling all the concepts of world-appearance and on the other, Vijñānavāda Buddhism in proving self-illuminating character of knowledge, etc. "—Dasgupta, p. 465.

Or Again,—"His (Śaṅkara's) Brahman was very much like the Śūnya of Nāgārjuna.....I am led to believe that Śaṅkara's philosophy is largely a compound of Vijñānavāda and Śūnyavāda Buddhism with the Upanishadic permanence of Self superadded." *ibid*, p. 494.

his chariot, with a mind agitated by grief." (Telang). Or,—" With a heart contaminated by the taint of helplessness, with a mind confounded about my duty, I ask you. Tell me what is assuredly good for me. I am your disciple; instruct me, who have thrown myself on your (indulgence)." (Telang).

When we now look to the end, we find that Kṛishṇa's " instruction " has ultimately succeeded in convincing him about the reasonableness of pursuing his acknowledged duty and rights in spite of the apparently disastrous character of so doing and that Arjuna with the spiritual tonic of this instruction has definitely decided to undertake to fight the imminent battle—his duty. So that when Kṛishṇa asks him,—

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्रेण चेतसा ।
कच्चिदज्ञानसंमोहः प्रणष्टस्ते धनंजय ॥ (xviii. 72)

" Have you listened to this, O son of Pṛithā, with a mind (fixed) on (this) one pointonly ? Has your delusion, (caused) by ignorance, been destroyed, Oh Dhanañjaya ? " (Telang),

Arjuna gladly replies—

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितोऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ (xviii. 73)

"Destroyed is my delusion; by your favour, Oh Achyuta. I now recollect myself. I stand freed from doubts. I will do your bidding." (Loc. cit.)

Thus the problem and solution of the Gītā obviously are concerned with *action* and its *morality*. How can we in the face of these clear facts accept the view of Śaṅkara which makes the cessation of activity the supreme end or purpose of the teachings of the Gītā? Says

Śaṅkara,—"तस्यास्य गीताशास्त्रस्य संक्षेपतः प्रयोजनं .... संसारस्य अत्यंतोपरमलक्षणम् । तच्च सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वकात् आत्मज्ञाननिष्ठारूपात् धर्मात् भवति ।
" The aim of this famous Gītā-śāstra is, briefly,...a complete cessation of Saṃsāra. This accrues from that religion which consists in a steady devotion to the knowledge of the Self, preceded by the renunciation of all works. " (Mahādev Shastri.)

What a tremendous judgment this ! Gītā was intended as is seen from its prologue and epilogue, mainly to be an *ethical* work* and so far as at least ethics are concerned, Śaṅkara's view of the Gītā-ethics as being ascetico-quietistic or inactivistic seems to be quite misleading. As regards the underlying metaphysic spoken of above—as being acosmistic absolutism or negativism—something will be said hereafter.

6

The Gita a Treatise on " Dharma. "

That Gītā is mainly a treatise on " Dharma "—" that collective Indian conception of the religious, social and moral rule of conduct† "—and not an abstract disquisition on metaphysical subtleties is also brought out if we take into cousideration the fact that the Gītā is an episode in the Māhābharata. Now any interpretation of the Episode must take account of its context in the larger whole, as it is a fact recognised on all hands that the former breathes a spirit or the general atmosphere of the latter. Mahābhārata is a sea of situations and their solutions in life. It is

*Compare— " The context in which the Gītā is said to be delivered, points out how its central purpose is to solve the problem of life and stimulate right conduct. It is obviously an ethical treatise,—a Yogashāstra."—Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* i. 532.

† Ghose, *Essays on the Gītā* p. 27.

a treatise on "Dharma." As Dr. Tagore* said, Mahābhārata is "unique in world-literature, not only because of its marvellous variety of human character, great and small, discussed in its pages in all variety of psychological circumstances, but because of the ease with which it carries in its comprehensive capaciousness all kinds of speculations about ethics, politics and philosophy of life Obviously, the Gītā which is the quintessence of Mahābhārata philosophy has assimilated most of these characteristics of its parent. Śaṅkara nowhere takes into account the significance of the contextual consideration like the above and thus shows a regrettable lack of historical sense. His constant tendency is to think that Gītā is meant to expound his pet philosophical theories of Absolutism and Illusionism and that ethical speculations have little or no space given to them in it. If at all there are any ethics in the Gītā according to Śaṅkara, they are those whose one end and aim is to annihilate themselves by sapping their own sources. For activity is the very essential material with which Ethics have to deal and yet Śaṅkara thinks that cessation of activity is all that is there to be called Ethics in the Gītā !—All this is the direct consequence of the utter neglect of the historico-contextual considerations in the interpretation of that work, the Gītā !

7.

The Hypothesis of the "Two Paths."

Nor can we accept the halfway house to the final cessation of activity invented by the genius of Śaṅkara, viz. the doctrine that Actions and Duty are also enjoined by scriptures, but only on those who belong to the lower or unenlightened class of aspirants, while the complete cessation of activity is the distinctive characteristic of the

* In his Presidential address to the Philosophical Congress at Calcutta on the 19th December 1925.

highest class of spiritual aspirants. Arjuna was asked to follow the Path of Action and Duty. That is certain. Now can we say that Arjuna belonged to the lower grade of aspirants ? and thus incapable of following the Path of Knowledge ? Śaṅkara would like to reply to this question in the affirmative. But facts do not seem to endorse his view. The very fact that he was in a doubt about the advisability of his taking up a warrior's duty shows that he had already transcended the level of a mere custormy or conventional ethic or that of the established social order and that he had risen to those speculative heights which are said to qualify one for following up the Path of Knowledge. Furthermore, the grand incident of the Divine Grace—in the eleventh Chapter— viz. the direct vision of the Divine—ought to remove all trace of doubt that Arjuna was merely an ordinary aspirant. At least he did not remain one after that incident. And if this is so, and, if again, duty and action are plainly enjoined upon such a man as Arjuna, who had reached the highest phase of spiritual aptitude, can we really resist the honest and obvious conclusion that dutiful action is the last and irreducible word of Gītā's ethical instruction ? The truth is that Śaṅkara's preconceived notions precluded him from any acceptance of this plain deliverance of the Gītā. Śaṅkara's mission in relation to the accepted Scriptures of authority was simply to show that the teachings of these were identical with his own original views. In fact, however, he did not claim to expound any new system as his own, but only to find it in the Scriptures. He was thus a brilliant and original thinker under the garb of an apologist theologian.* It was in

* Compare—"Śaṅkara did not claim to be the inventor or expounder of an original system but interpreted the Sūtras and the Upanishads [and the Gītā] in order to show that there existed a connected and systematic philosophy in the Upanishads [and the Gītā] which was also enunciated in the Sūtras...He had thus to show that the uncontradicted testimony of all the Upanishads [and other authorities] was in favour of the view he held."—Dasgupta, Op. cit. pp. 430f.

this latter capacity that he had to take the help of the hypothesis of the "Two-fold Ethical path"—Activism and Quietism—the former being subservient or ancillary to the latter. But shall we be unfair if, in view of what has been seen above, we say that in him the apologist has prejudiced the interpreter?

8

The Westward Path for an Eastward Destination.

There is another reason also for the rejection of the view that the works should be done to ultimately qualify oneself for their total cessation, which is the final goal. If cessation of all activity is the goal, how can pursuit of actions—the exact contradictory of it—be conducive to that ultimate goal? Why not enjoin cessation of activity from the very first? Is it logic to ask one to proceed eastward, when the destination lies westward? As Śaṅkara himself says in his Bhāshya on xviii. 55— नहि पूर्वसमुद्रं जिगमिषोः प्रातिलोम्येन प्रत्यक्समुद्रं जिगमिषुणा समानमार्गत्वं संभवति । (p. 515). "He who wishes to reach the Eastern sea should not indeed travel in exactly the opposite direction, i. e. by the very same road that the man who wishes to go to the Western sea chooses."—(Mahadev Shastri). And yet Śaṅkara enjoins us to *pursue* actions with a view ultimately to *renounce* them! Śaṅkara would perhaps say that the mere intellectual apprehension of the cessation of activity as one's ultimate and proper end would not do to qualify oneself for the immediate renunciation, but that there must be nothing less than a direct spiritual perception of that truth. This too is not convincing. Do we not do many things simply and merely on the advice of the medico-hygienic science without ourselves understanding the ground or reason of doing so? Why not then give a similar following to the spiritual science which apparently reveals to us our being's

end and aim—though this latter may seem to us a mere void in which there is no activity? Yet Śaṅkara would not advise a precipitate and direct renunciation without previously going through a course of works. Why this vacillation? The truth is that Śaṅkara wanted somehow to explain away the Path of Duty and Works, which also, though not acceptable to him from the standpoint of his own system, is, along with the other Path—that of Knowledge —, undoubtedly enjoined by the Scriptures,—which he could not plainly deny. This he did by subsuming the latter under the former which was acceptable to him as was also endorsed by the Scriptures.

9

The Moral Ideal attainable, yet not attainable.

We shall incidentally point out here a contradiction that Śaṅkara could not see in his enthusiasm. In the second chapter from the verse 54 onwards, Kṛishṇa has sketched on Arjuna's request some characteristics of an ideal moral Personality—"Sthitaprajña" as he is called—just as the Stoics and Epicureans in ancient Greece used to depict their "Ideal sage" or "Wise Man." Now commenting on this verse, Śaṅkara says as regards these characteristics (Ānandā. Ed. p. 81)—

सर्वत्रैव हि अध्यात्मशास्त्रे कृतार्थलक्षणानि यानि तानि एव
साधनानि उपदिश्यन्ते यत्नसाध्यत्वात् । यानि यत्नसाध्यानि
साधनानि लक्षणानि च भवन्ति तानि श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

"For everywhere in spiritual science, the very characteristic attributes of the successful Yogin are taught as the means (of attaining that stage) since they are to be attained by effort. The Lord now points out those characteristic attributes, which as attainable by effort constitute the means as well." Now in the couse of the eighteenth Chapter

commenting on the 66th verse which enjoins an all-sided resignation of oneself to the Divine care, he incidentally says (p. 521)—

अकार्यत्वात् निःश्रेयसस्य कर्मसाधनत्वानुपपत्तिः ।

" Since the highest Bliss is not an effect to be accomplished by action, works cannot be the means to it." In the first passage above he seems to think that the characteristics of a blessed man can be assimilated by a concentrated effort to realise them in one's own self and thus the Bliss can be realised by one's own actions. Moral life is thus a *positive* process of *creating* and conserving values by our own efforts. He contradicts himself in the second passage and says that actions cannot take you to Bliss; cannot be a means to attain it. Of course this is quite in keeping with *his own* theory. Knowledge with him is not a far-off distant ideal to be approached by gradual advances towards it. It is with you already; only you have to overcome your ignorance or illusion in order to be able to recognise it. So also with our moral ideal or Bliss. This for him is an Eternal Reality,—is not something to be brought into existence by our moral efforts; only we have to overcome or get rid of our various imperfections and impurities in order to realise the Ideal. Moral life is thus a *negative* process of removing impediments and hindrances in the way of the already and eternally existing Perfection being recognised as reigning supreme in us.—We leave it to the reader to note the contradiction for himself. The latter passage represents his own view, while the former that of the Gītā. Śaṅkara wanted to reconcile both in his commentary (on the Gītā); but he could not conceal the one, as he could not be untrue to the other, and thus the inherent opposition between the two is left unreconciled.

10

Ramanuja.

These, then, are some of the grounds that the writer of this paper, while reading the Bhāshya of Śaṅkara (on the Gītā), found to reject the line of interpretation adopted by that monistic philosopher. For a fuller criticism of his views on the Gītā, I refer the reader to the Bhāshya on the Gītā by Rāmānuja. This does not mean, of course, that Rāmānuja himself has been impartial enough in his own interpretation of the Gītā. Even here, once more we have to say that Gītā has been utilised for sectarian purposes. Rāmānuja belonged to a school of Vaishṇavism and he has tried to make out in his commentary that Resignation and Devotion (Prapatti and Bhakti) alone constitute the highest and the only path way laid down by the Gītā. This is not correct. But, as it is, the main metaphysical and ethical views of Rāmānuja are themselves of such a nature that they require little manipulation of the text or the spirit of the Gītā. Rāmānuja's sectarian doctrine only requires an emphasis on some aspects included along with others in the moral and metaphysical system of the Gītā. More particularly, while Gītā upholds a spiritually all-sided and integral moral and religious ideal of Knowledge, Love and Service of God, Rāmānuja emphasises only the Love aspect of it. The merit of Rāmānuja is that though he has not done justice to the importance of other aspects of the ideal, in his commentary on the Gītā at various places, he has not scrupled to recognise, nor has he tried to explain away, their importance. The path of Duty and Works, for example, of which Śaṅkara fought shy, has been candidly recognised wherever the Gītā enjoins it.*

* Vide especially in his Bhāshya the following references: iii. 8 and 20; iv. introduction and 18; v. introdction and 7; xviii. 48; *et passim.*

CHAPTER III

Tilak on the Gītā

1

His main ethical Thesis.

An examination and evaluation of the various interpretations of the Gītā attempted in the past—which is not the purpose here of this essay—would require a complete examination, verse by verse, of the whole text of the Gītā and the commentaries on it and this cannot be done here. But some general critical work has to be done before one attempts one's own independent exposition or interpretation. It was on this account that some general references have been made above to one or two classical writers on the Gītā. I shall, before I proceed to sketch the general line of my own interpretation, refer to one recent and a considerable interpreter of the Gītā whom the whole of modern India agrees in holding to have been, in his own way, one of the greatest of her sons—I mean the late Bal Gangadhar Tilak—the author of "Gītā-rahasya."*

* Space forbids as here also to consider the rival line of interpretation taken by Mr. M. K. Gandhi, expounded in his recent article on the "Meaning of Gītā" (Young India, November 12, 25.) and subsequently defended by a pupil of his in another discourse (reported in Young India, Jan. 14, 26.) But as Mr. Gandhi virtually admits in his article that his interpretation bases itself on a personal conviction rather than an objective criticism (cf. his dictum—"Heart accepts a conclusion for which the Reason subsequently finds the reasoning"), we need not regret for our "spatial" limitations either!

Tilak has given us the fruit of his forty years of speculative labour in his book which well promises to go down to posterity as a classical work on the subject. In it he gives us what seems to him the right interpretation of the Gītā. He has given in support of his thesis various reasons, philosophical, historico-contextual as well as philological and has pressed the whole of his wonderful learning into its service. The book is, in every sense, a rare and unique production and has already been the spiritual text of a particular class of people in this part of our country. The main thesis of his book is indicated by the alternative title of it—Karmayoga-śāstra or "Science and Philosophy of Activism." It may be given in his own words—"The Lord has, in the Gītā expounded a Dharma which reconciles Intellect (Knowledge), Love (Devotion) and Will and provides for the practical conduct of life that is essentially in consistence or compatible with the final Emancipation (Moksha),—a Dharma which originates in knowledge and is essentially one of love and one which issues into ceaseless and selfless activity."*

2

His ethical Difference and metaphysical Agreement with Sankara.

Thus, his view of the Gītā so far as at least ethics are concerned, is the very antithesis of that of Śaṅkara, who held out complete quiescence as the highest ideal of the Gītā. But this redoubtable ethical adversary of Śaṅkara, it is really very strange, to find is in complete agreement with him as regards the metaphysical basis of the Gītā. Again to quote him—"The Vedānta which is expounded in the Gītā is one of the *advaitic* type as in the school of Śaṅkara; but although there is thus a general metaphysical agreement between the Gītā and the Śaṅkara School, still we are of the opi-

* See especially chapters 11 and 12 of his book; *et passim*.

nion that the Gītā-dharma became different from that of Śaṅkara School, because the Gītā in its Ethics values the Path of Duty more than the Path of Renunciation." (p.234).* This passage gives us in a nutshell the most important difference as well as the most important agreement between the two great thinkers.

What have we to say of this? We accord our wholehearted agreement and support to the main ethical thesis of Tilak quoted in his own words above. He has indeed rendered a valuable service in the cause of an ethical appreciation of the Gītā and that is the most lasting merit of his work. But we cannot follow him in his acceptance of Śaṅkara's metaphysics as being those of the Gītā. I shall proceed to indicate briefly some of the grounds for my conclusion.

3.

Coherence between Ethics and Metaphysics.

First of all, a very general consideration suggests itself. In any set of circumstances, in our practical life, two aspects of the mental activity of any individual can be broadly distinguished.— (i) That which is directed to obtaining an adequate knowledge of the situation or circumstances, (the theoretical knowledge of the actual matter of fact), and — (ii) That which is directed to the devising of the line or lines of responsive action in keeping with and based upon the knowledge previously acquired (the consequent practical knowledge of the matter). First, that is to say *to be*, we try *to know* and then, we want *to act* upon our knowledge. The first is the *theoretical* or *speculative* activity of our thought and the second is the *practical* activity of it. Now, the universe is one big set or totality of circumstances in which the individual finds himself and he is called upon to live there a life that

* See also Chapter 9th, *et passim*.

is in some sense good. Here also in the mental activity of this individual in regard to this supreme totality of circumstances, the two general aspects—the *speculative* and the *practical*, spoken of above, are essentially distinguishable. The only thing is that his thoughts now concern themselves with the ultimate things and, therefore, have a high degree of complexity and, perhaps, a system. They now come to be called speculative philosophy or *metaphysics* and practical philosophy or *ethics*. The one is the Science of *Being*, Existence, what is ; the other is the science of the *Ideal*, what ought to be. If this is clear, the next step is obvious, viz ; that there is always a logical relation of coherence or correspondence subsisting between one's metaphysics and one's ethics. The latter are based upon and implies the former, so that when one is known or given, the other can be known by an inferential process. If you tell me your ethics or metaphysics, I shall tell you your metaphysics or ethics. If this is not so, one may rest sure that there is some mistake or fallacy lurking somewhere in the line of ethical-metaphysical thought which has to be removed for the latter to be tenable or valid.

4.

The Gita a "Yogashastra" rooted in "Brahma-vidya."

Now in the Bhagavadgītā, the initial problem and the final solution are both distinctively *ethical*. And it is clearly in order to prove fully the validity of his complete line of ethical thinking that Lord Kṛishṇa has undertaken to expound his metaphysics. On his metaphysics rested his ethics.*—Kṛishṇa is, to use modern European terminology, a metaphysical moralist.

* Cf. "The bulk of the Gītā is taken up with the Yogashāstra rather than with Brahma-vidyā.....Philosophical truths are adduced here more for the purpose of supporting Yoga doctrines rather than for entering upon an intellectual discussion of philosophical problems." Dr. Kurtkoti, *Heart of the Gītā*, p. 17.

As Professor Radhakrishnan finely puts it—" It (Gītā) is obviously an ethical treatise,—a Yogashātra.....But no ethical message can be sustained if it is not backed up by a metaphysical statement. So the Yogashāstra of the Gītā is rooted in Brahma-vidyā or knowledge of the spirit." (Op. cit. p. 532). T. H. Green's system is a recent notable parallel in the West. His ethical theses were prefaced and propped up by a complete system of metaphysics. Now in the case of the author of the Gītā, we are presumably entitled to expect that his metaphysics and ethics were consistent with each other and if this is not so, we would have to say that his ethics rested on an adequate or insecure basis. There are some reasons—and these have been indicated above—to hold, with Tilak, that the ethics of the Gītā are by no means of the Śaṅkarite import. And if we again hold, with Tilak, that the metaphysics of the Gītā are the same as those of Śaṅkara, I venture to think that we shall be virtually admitting that the ethics and metaphysics of the Gītā are *not* mutually consistent or compatible. Tilak has held, in the opinion of this writer at least, a position which is ultimately reducible to this admission, though he does not see it himself.

5

A metaphysical Staticism, an insecure Basis for an ethical Dynamism.

For it is an important truth that the metaphysical Absolutism of Śaṅkarite type cannot give an adequate or secure basis to the ethical Activism of Tilak's type. If the Self, in its ultimate nature, is devoid of all qualities, as it is affirmed in Śaṅkara's philosophy, if the Self is absolutely changeless and inactive, what will you do with your ethical ideal of ceaseless activiiy ? If really you take up that metaphysical conception of Self in a spirit of seriousness and earnestness, then complete inaction becomes the final stage of perfection,—which is not accepted by Tilak. The Tilakite man of perfection can (and should) still retain his activity even in his final stage. But if this is so, what about his metaphysical thesis about the ultimate nature of Self ? If you accept static metaphystics, then your ethics also must be static. But if you accept dynamism in ethics, then your metaphysics must also be in some sense dynamic. Any way, you cannot combine metaphysical Staticism with ethical Dynamism without a gross logical breach. Clearly Tilak is guilty of having attempted an impossible synthesis. In his philosophy, the positive and the negative have been forcibly brought together and the consequence is the spark of a glaring inconsistency running across his entire line of thinking. Śaṅkara was at least self-consistent, untrue to facts though. To him, the Self was an immutable and qualityless metaphysical entity and his ethical ideal was just the direct realisation of this nature of the Self in concrete *actual* life. But, unfortunately, not so with Tilak. His conception of Self is still the same as Śaṅkara's and yet ceaseless activity is its (Self's) lot ! Shall we say—Tilak was much too engaged and immersed in the worldly, though altruistic, concerns to have sympathies with the quietistic ethical implications of Śaṅkara's metaphysics ; yet he was too intellectual not to appreciate the bold sigularistic thesis of Śaṅkara's metaphysics ! He wanted both to retain his own ethical Dynamism and also accept metaphysical Staticism. But in the nature of things, these are the two horns of a gaping dilemma and you cannot seize them both !

6

Absolutism in relation to some moral and religious Concepts.

The same kind of conclusion is forced upon us when we try to think out the Absolutist position in relation to some important ethical and religious concepts. We shall refer to these here very briefly.

First, as regards the concept of the individual Self. This concept is very vital both to our moral and religious life. Ethical action and religious devotion must be in some sence referrible to an individual (as distinguished from his environment). Yet, in Absolutism, the Absolute (which the Self *is* ultimatly) is the one Reality—"the one without a second". *Individual* Self there is none in reality. Even God or Īśvara—the object of devotion—is declared to be in the ultimate analysis, "an illusion in the illusory world." Nor can the ultimate Reality be conceived as Goodness or Perfection as is demanded by ethical consciousness. Further as regards moral responsibility this conception is also declared to be illusory, as the Self is in its real nature a non-doer. No activity can touch it. In its very nature it is inactive and cannot be responsible for what is called the morality or otherwise of the actions. The same is the case with the conception of Progress. Since the ultimate state of things is a static one, there is no change or progress. What seems like such is only in the realm of illusion or māyā. The conclusion is forced upon us, therefore, that the metaphysical Absolutism of Śaṅkara's type is an inadequate, or even an insecure basis for what are usually understood as Ethics and Religion. Tilak who retains the latter (both) cannot really accept the former as their foundation.*

7

The Gita : a self-consistent metaphysico-ethical Treatise.

Now in view of the above, what have we to say of the Gītā itself? Tilak and Śaṅkara might hold their own views on Metaphysics and Ethics; but can they also hold that Gītā also holds or endorses

* I was glad to find that a similar criticism had already been passed on Tilak's philosophy by Prof. Radhakrishnan in his article on "B. G. Tilak" contributed to Mr. Nateson's volume—"Eminent Orientalists."

their views? As I said before, we cannot, in order to ascertain this, undertake here a verse-by-verse examination of the Gītā text. Some very brief and general evidential indications may, however, be given. Some are already given to show that Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Gītā, at least on its ethical side, is essentially wrong and Tilak agrees with us here. The Gītā does not hold quietistic Ethics. But Tilak accepts Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Gītā-metaphysics. This also in our opinion is a mistake. If the Gītā does not hold quietistic thics, it does not hold singularistic metaphysics, either. The general trend of the philosophical disquisitions of the Gītā is really a *conserving* one and not a *negativistic* one, as in Śaṅkara's philosophy. One who carefully and with an open mind reads especially tenth and eleventh Chapters—the Vibhūti-Yoga and the Viśva-rūpa-darshana-Yoga-of. the poem will be more than convinced that the Reality or Brahman according to the Gītā is not at all estranged from the world as Śaṅkara's philosophy has a constant tendency to imply. I can never conceive of a writer with thorough-going Śaṅkarite convictions devoting so much space and so much importance, as the Gītā apparently does in its 10th and 11th chapters, to what in the ultimate Vedāntic analysis amounts to a big illusion—I mean the world with all its wealth and variety of detail. The tenth and eleventh chapters especially the latter, are to my mind the definite (though symbolico-poetical) indications of the Gītākāra's view that the appearances are *conserved* even in the ultimate reference, *not absorbed*, not negated. Again in the ninth Chapter—called "Royal-Lore-Royal-Secret," and thus having quite an important place in the author's own view—and in some other places, a very great emphasis has been laid on devotion, *bhakti*, even in the ultimate or final stage,—which means that Absolutism is not the strict creed of the Gītā,

In the seventh adhyāya and in some other places, God has definitely maintained his *creative relation* to the world precluding any real possibility of that relation being interpreted as illusory, *māyika*, or inexplicable and mysterious, *anirvāchya*, as it is termed in the Śaṅkarite School of Vedānta. There are also other passages interspersed throughout the text which are not satisfactorily explained on a singularistic interpretation of the Gītā-metaphysics. But we have no space to do full justice to these matters here. We shall, therefore, proceed to briefly outline our own method of interpreting the Gītā,—some of our conclusions as regards the teaching of which have been already hinted at in the general critical work done above. After we finish our sketch of our method of interpretation, these same conclusions will be clearer, especially in their relation to the interpretations put on the Gītā by Śaṅkara and Tilak. To anticipate a little, let me state them in a few words. The ethical teachings of the Gītā as well as the metaphysical have been incorrectly interpreted by Śaṅkara and as regards Tilak we may say that though he has done justice to the ethical side of the Gītā, he has not correctly interpreted the underlying metaphysics. Gītā gives us its moral and metaphysical philosophies which are essentially consistent with each other. This will be seen from some remarks made above and more especially in the chapters V and VI in the sequel.

Appendix No. 1.

For clearness sake and for ready reference the comparative views of Śaṅkara, Tilak, and the Gītā are cast below in a Table.

Thinkers	Metaphysics	Ethics	Remarks
I. Śaṅkara	Negativistic Metaphysics.	Quietistico-Ascetic Ethics.	Logically consistent but untrue to facts; therefore unacceptable.
II. Tilak	Negativistic Metaphysics.	Activistic Ethics.	Mutually inconsistent but Ethics right because true to fact.
III. Gītākāra	Conserving Metaphysics.	Endæmonism or the Ethics of complete Personality.	Consistent and true; hence acceptable.

CHAPTER IV.

An Outline of the Historical Method of the Interpretation of the Gītā

1.

The Study of the historical Precedents of the Gita.

Now to proceed to our methodological work. To ascertain the distinctive significance of a work of thought, a general survey of its historical precedents always proves to be of very great help and it is this truth that has led to the recognition in the West of the study of the History of Philosophy as a valuable discipline in the list of philosophical sciences. It is always the essence of the scientific method to relate the objects of its study to the conditions in which it appears. To science as such, an object is nothing if it cannot be so related to its conditions. This retrospective view is the characteristic feature of what is here called the historical study. In India, the application of the historical method to the philosophical thought of our ancestors has unfortunately been allowed to remain largely a desideratum. The consequence has been that the textualists have been busy for centuries in manipulating the recognised texts in the service of their own dogmas. Systems, the very opposite of each other have been thrust upon the same texts. I need only remind the reader of the traditional schools of Vedānta and their voluminous commentaries on the three recognisedly authoritative texts—the Vedāntic Institutes or Prasthānas.

Now the Gītā has its own historical precedents; which deserve our study if we want to arrive at a correct interpretation of its teachings. Of these, the Rigveda and the chief earlier Upanishads may be taken as the representative ones. A general view of these, it is here contended, will be helpful to us in our study of the Gītā. I shall try here only in bare outline to sketch the general features of the contents of both.*

2

The Vedic Thought : a theological Pluralism with a practical Hedonism.

In the Rigveda† and other texts of that time, the scholars tell us, we find almost everywhere the Seers (or Vedic poets) occupied with various deities, their description, their propitiation, etc. Quite a good number of Sūktas or lyrics of the Rigveda are hymns to various gods and goddesses—like Varuṇa, Indra, Ushas, and others. Now these passages must be supposed to constitute the philosophical thought of our predominantly intellectual, though primitive, ancestors, when they were living face to face with the wonders of Nature and dependent upon these for their own existence. It is but natural that people, so circumstanced and so constituted as these Vedic people were, should attempt definite formulations of the nature of the phenomena among which they lived and moved. Their speculations now after thousands of years may seem to us superstitious

* We are not here concerned with the *exact* dates of these. Hence I have not touched that point at all in the text. But it will be remembered that we are generally given, in the History of ancient Sanskrit Literature, three periods called the *Vedic*, the *Upanishadic* and the *Epic*. Rigveda represents the first, the chief Upanishads the second, and Mahābhārata (of the philosophy of which Gītā—the book we are studying here—is the quintessence), the third period.

† It must be mentioned here that the present writer is no specialised student of Vedic and Upanishadic literatures. His judgments on the subjects are largely based on information derived from certain books on them written by experts and the original passages quoted therein.

and mythological and crude ; but there is no gainsaying the fact that these speculations, in their own way though, embody or at least logically imply a definite view of the world which we can, if we try, translate into modern terminology. They reduced the world to a number of principles which they called the deities and to which they addressed their prayers. Each principle has apparently its own way of working and so far all these principles independent of each other. Let us name this as the doctrine of Polytheism or more accurately Theological Pluralism. Perhaps the Vedic seers themselves were not conscious of this logical implication of their speculations ; but it is this that their thought is logically reducible to. And let us take this as their metaphysical creed. Upon this it is that their ethical speculations must have grounded themselves ; for, as was said before, one's ethics ultimately are based on one's metaphysics. Now we find that the ethical speculations of the Vedic people were quite in keeping with their line of general metaphysical thinking indicated above. A dip into the pages of any Vedic Selection will show us that the Vedic people offered sacrifices of various kinds to the deities and prayed to them to confer on them certain gifts. Since the various deities are the ultimate governors of the world, the inevitable duty of man naturally becomes to please them and be pleased himself. The Vedic people therefore poured forth libations of Soma-juice (wine) to these deities and intoxicated themselves by drinking it. They also offered in sacrifices to these deities many other things such as bull, horse. etc—things (and animals) which they themselves prized much and prayed them to confer on them gifts such as long life, beautiful wives, brave sons, etc. We find all this in the Vedic songs and prayers. What is this but a Practical Hedonism or the Ethics of Instinct ?—Thus we see that the Vedic precedent of the Gītā

can be broadly characterised as a Theological Pluralism together with a Practical Hedonism based on it.

3

The Upanishadic Thought : a Metaphysical Singularism with a Philosophical Asceticism.

We pass on to the Upanishadic stage which is the second important historical antecedent of the Gītā. The general character of the Upanishadic thought is more or less familiar to all of us and so I shall only very briefly dwell upon it. Now the Upanishads constitute a remarkable reaction against the more or less common-sense speculations of the Vedic times. The Vedic conceptions of gods and goddesses, of sacrifices and enjoyments soon became unsatisfactory and even distasteful. The necessity was felt to think deeper and go beyond the shallow Theological Pluralism of the earlier times to the ONE which alone really is and which is the Absolute, the Brahman, the one without a second, the real spiritual substratum at the basis of the big illusion of this external world.* "The One alone is and Men call it Many." This one supreme Reality was also identified with the Self or Atman ; "तत्त्वमसि"†—that thou art, is one of the most important Upanishadic texts, The Self is the Brahman itself in its real nature. Such was the sweeping metaphysical reaction against the Vedic theological speculations, which is called the absolute Monism or Singularism of the Upani-

* It is still a debatable question whether the Upanishads really countenance the Māyāvāda or the illusion theory. Some important writers are inclined to think that they do not. See for e. g. Dr. Barua's *History of Pre-Buddhistic Philosophy* or Professor Radhakrishnan's *Philosphy of the Upanishads*. But for a general characterisation, it is better here to put the matter with a little more emphasis on the monism of the Upanishads with its "illusionistic" implications. Hence the use of the term "illusion" in the text. The suggestion is one of unimportance. rather than absolute unreality.

† Chhāndogya Upanishad, vi. 8.

shads. As we might expect, the Upanishadic ethics also signalise a corresponding reaction against the Vedic ethics viz. the doctrine of practical Hedonism. One's ethics, once more let us note, are based on one's metaphysics. The Self as Brahman being the supreme and the only Reality and the one that resides only in the inward depths of ourselves rather than in the external world, the one categorical duty of human beings is to try and realise this real nature of the Self in our actual concrete experience. The Self alone is the source of all *real* peace and happiness. Everything is dear to us only as related to the Self and so Self becomes the object of all our efforts and care. I need only remind the reader of the famous passage in the second Chapter of the Bṛihadāraṇyaka* Upanishad where the sage Yājñavalkya undertakes an inductive proof of the truth that everything has a value to us only as related to the Self and that nothing has value in itself. The realisation of such a Self, which is the one and the only intrinsic value is our highest (ethical) good. The Upanishad asks us to see this Self, to hear it, to meditate on it, etc. All other activity which has not this end in view is valueless. To renounce this illusory world in the quest of the Self† and to fix our very being in the Self which is by itself a non-doer (akartṛi), immutable (akshara), qualityless (nirguṇa) and so on — this, then, became our Ethical good in the Upanishadic times and may be characterised as the Philosophical Asceticism or the Ethics of Penance (as opposed to that of Pleasure in the Vedas). Thus we see that the Upanishadic thought, which is the second important precedent of the Gītā can be described roughly as a Metaphysical Singuralism together with a Philosophical Asceticism based on it.

* Bṛih. ii. 4-5.

† Cf. a later Mahābhārata saying—आत्मार्थे पृथिवीं त्यजेत् (ii. 61. 11).

4

The Law of Development by Opposition.

When a hanging pendulum is left free from a certain level it goes directly to the same level on the opposite side and after a while comes to a position which is right between the two opposite ones occupied at first. So it happens with philosophical concepts. At first, in our attempt to characterise the reality, a certain conception gains ground and holds the field for a while : but very soon its limitations and drawbacks become apparent and its one-sideness forces attention to the other neglected aspects of reality. Then, there takes place a transition to the conception which is more or less opposed to the first and this now holds the field. But being equally onesided and therefore unsatisfactory, — the need of a fresh attempt is felt and an account is now taken of the past (first) attempt. Reality is distorted by both the one-sided attempts and so these could give us only half-truths. Now in the third attempt a serious task is undertaken, viz., to merge the separate half-truths in a wider and reconciling conception, which comes nearer the truth than did the first two ones. This reconciling conception in its turn holds the field for a time and when the time comes, that too undergoes the fate of its predecessors and the progress of thought is always going on like this. The three recurring moments of this development are called the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hegel called this the Law of Triadic Development and tried to demonstrate its truth in his "Lectures on the History of Philosophy," where he has arranged the development of philosophic conceptions according to the scheme sketched above. Though Hegel himself is seen to be somewhat arbitrary and artificial in many respects is forcing his formula upon facts, still the main suggestion of Development by opposition underlying his treatment is valuable.

5.

Its Significance for the Gita-study.

Now to utilise these general considerations for the matter in our hands. We have noted that the Vedic texts embody the first attempt of our ancestors to envisage Reality and we have seen that the Upanishadic texts represent the second main attempt in that direction. We have also seen that the main metaphysical and ethical conceptions belonging to these two stages are more or less opposed to each other. They constitute, that is to say, the thesis and the antithesis of our philosophical development. And it is the belief (grounded on facts, so far as I can judge) of the writer of this essay that the Gītā—which is the quintessence of our philosophy of the Epic period—formulates the first and a most remarkable and on the whole a successful synthesis of our philosophical conceptions. So long as this belief is not substantiated by a detailed examination of the contents of the Gītā, it remains, of course, a mere guess, a hypothesis. But we cannot, as we said before, undertake here a detailed *textual* examination of the Gītā. Still our own exposition of its philosophy (which will be done in our chapters V and VI below and will be solely based on the truth of the above hypothesis), will, if it be successfully done, have done something to show that our hypothesis is at least a plausible one and a hypothesis for which a case can be made out as having some evidence in the text. Let me state, in the meanwhile, in advance my belief that the more one reads the Gītā with this hypothesis in on mind, the more plausible it sounds.

In the table given at the end of this chapter, (Appendix No. 2, page 40), the Gītā has been treated as the third i. e. the synthetic step in our philosophical development. A few words should be added here in brief explanation of the sense of the doctrines put against its name.

As regards metaphysics,—whereas the Vedic conception asserts the plurality (Many) and independence of the ultimate principles in the world, and whereas, on the other hand, the Upanishadic conception asserts the absolute unity (One) of the real and the importance of the world,—the Gītā, it is contended, avoids both the extremes and asserts that the Reality is a cosmos in which there is a gradation of values and that, therefore, the *One* and the *Many* can both be asserted as true ultimately. That is to say, the Gītā is a system of Cosmism or Axiological Idealism (phrases made current by, especially, the writings of Professor J. S. Mackenzie) in metaphysics. As for ethics —whereas the Vedic conception laid a stress on Instinct and hedonistic activism, and the Upanishadic one on Reason and ascetic quietism,—the Gīta tries to mediate between the two extremes and gives us an Ethics of Complete Personality—in which is sought the perfection of all aspects of our mental and spiritual life and involves a measure both of activism and quietism (asceticism). In other words the Gītā, it is contended, gives us a system of *Eudœmonism* or *Perfectionism* in Ethics.

Appendix No. 2.

A Table of Prospect and Retrospect

For the sake of clearness and ready reference I cast below in a table the comparative views of the main stages—the Vedic, the Upanishadic and the Epic—of our philosophic development.

Periods	*Metaphysics*	*Ethics*
I Vedic Period *Thesis.*	Polytheism or Theological Pluralism (Many)	Ethics of Instinct or Practical Hedonism, (Activism) Pravṛitti.
II Upanishadic Period *Antithesis.*	Absolutism or Metaphysical Singularism (One)	Ethics of Reason or Philosophical Asceticism, (Quietism.) Nivṛitti.
III Epic Period (Gītā) *Synthesis*	Cosmism or Axiological Idealism (Many & One)	Eudæmonism or Ethics of Complete Personality, (Activism-Quietism) Pravṛitti-Nivṛitti.

PART II

CHAPTER V

The Metaphysics of the Gītā

1

A Retrospect and a Prospect.

The first part of our task comes to an end now. We shall, therefore, take a brief retrospect and prospect of our journey here. We began with a few introductory words and proceeded to very briefly examine two representative interpretations of the Gītā in the past: those of Saṅkara and Tilak. Both we found to be defective and therefore we outlined a plea and an hypothesis for the historical interpretation of the Gītā. It is on the lines of the hypothesis formulated above that a brief preeentation of the metaphysical and moral philosophy of the Gītā is to follow. Textual references (to be given in what follows) must be taken to constitute the general evidence for the validity of our hypothesis. Gītā itself is not a systematic work written methodically. It is put in a loose dialogue form and is written in an epic-dogmatic-didactic fashion and style. If, therefore, one wants to extract and present its philosophy, one has but to gather and collate passages on various topics from various chapters. This circumstance makes it a bit difficult to be on one's guard to see that justice is done to the text and spirit of Gītā. I myself do not know whether I have succeeded in taking all the necessary care in my own reading of the poem. All I can do here is to state my interpretation of the views of the Gītā and give passages in support.

Gītā, we saw, is a system of ethics based on a system of metaphysics,—a Yogaśāstra rooted in Brahma-vidyā. We shall proceed first to expound the metaphysical foundations and then we shall give a sketch of the ethical superstructure.

2

The Metaphysical Problem of Reality.

The problem of Reality is the centre of all speculation. Alike in practical life and in abstract theorising about the world, the problem of distinguishing the apparent from the real is the problem *par excellence*. Various purposes and standpoints determine or modify our definitions of reality and it is this fact that is at the basis of the diversity of sciences and their apparently diverse results. Metaphysics are an attempt to formulate, in abstraction from all mundane purposes and standpoints, a definition of the ultimately Real. In other words, metaphysics is the one purely scientific attempt to define Reality, as it is apart from our purposes and standpoints. Still, the ultimately Real has yet to be taken account of by all purposes and standpoints. It is in this spirit that the Gītā approaches the discussions of the Real. Arjuna's initial attitude did not conform to the constitution of the ultimate Reality. Reality when rightly conceived leaves no room for his doubts and lamentations. On the other hand, doing his natural and normal duty would seem to be the only course compatible with our metaphysical knowledge of Reality. Such virtually is the substance of the argument of Krishna in the Gītā. Thus, when Krishna at the very beginning saw that Arjuna's collapse was not an ordinary one and could not be ousted by mere appeals to Arjuna's warrior-instincts (vide Chapter Second, first few verses), but that it signalised a complete estrangement from the ordinary conventional moral codes, he proceeded straight to give Arjuna a right conception of Reality which in Krishna's view left no room for the pessimistic-sceptic position such as had been taken by Arjuna — vide e. g. the ground cited by Krishna to show why Arjuna should not be sorry for the sombre nature of his duty—

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पंडिताः ॥
न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ (ii. 11–12.)

"You have grieved for those who deserve no grief, and you speak words of wisdom. Learned men grieve not for the living nor the dead. Never did I not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men; nor will any one of us ever hereafter cease to be." (Telang).

3

The Gita—a System of Axiological Idealism.

The Philosophy of Gītā is a system af Idealism. The term "Idealism" however is not to be understood in the Berkeleian sense. Except perhaps the exception of one school of Buddhist philosophy and its sympathisers, there is no Berkelianism in Indian Philosophy. The problem of Idealism is faced in the Gītā rather from the side of value. And in modern European thought the same tendency has now become obvious. In fact Pringle-Pattison thinks that the Idea of Value as "the clue to the ultimate nature of Reality is the fundamental contention of all Idealistic philosophy since Kant's time.* The same principle has been in substance enunciated in the Gītā (x. 41.)—

* *Idea of God.*—p. 38. Also compare—

"Idealism means essentially the interpretation of the world according to a scale of value, or in Plato's phrase, by the Idea of the Good or the Best." *Op. cit.* p. 181.

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसंभवम् ॥

"Whatever thing (there is) of power, glorious, or splendid, know all that to be produced from portions of my energy." (Telang). This verse in the opinion of this writer is the clue to the general philosophy of the Gītā. The ultimate Reality is here speaking to us in a personalised form and giving us what seems (to me) like a formulation of a definite criterion of reality enabling us to trace the Divine Immanence in the world.

It will be seen that such a principle gives a direct lie to the theory that the world is an illusion. This latter theory of Śaṅkara relegates the whole world to the realm of illusion and the verse above declares that the principle of value realises itself *in the world.* According to one theory, the world is an enigma having no intelligible relation to God or Reality ; according to the other, the world is a direct manifestation of His glory. To the one the world is not at all of the essence of God or Reality, to the other, "God fulfils himself in many ways" in the world. The whole of the eleventh Chapter is given to a symbolic representations of the Divine manifestations. There is one central Principle—such is the virtual significance of the chapter—in the world and that is God and this principle more or less pervades all things. All things are more or less adequate realisations of the God or the Idea of Value. The form or Idea of anything—Idea in the Platonic sense—is God Himself. Things are real or have a value only so far as they realise this Idea or God in themselves. Is this not an admirable parallel to Platonic Idealism—Idealism that rests ultimately on the Idea of Good or Value ? It is this species of Idealism that has been designated in recent times by Western philosophers (notably by Prof. J. S. Mackenzie) as Axiological Idealism.

The general standpoints indicated above enable the Gītā to avoid both the extremes in metaphysics—the irreconcilable dualism of Sāṁkhya philosophers aud the excessive monism of the Vedāntists.* This is done, on the one hand, by putting above the Sāṁkhya-Dualism of Spirit and Nature the *presiding God* of whom the two former are the higher and lower manifestations and, on the other, by insisting that the world also is a *manifestation* of God and not an *illusion* as Vedānta says. Thus Gītā is a system neither of singularism nor of multiplicism, but one, say, of James Ward's type,—which is, so to say, a monistic pluralism,—monistic because there is only one principle in essence (the Divine Spirit) which manifests itself in this world, but also pluralistic because that principle fulgurates into *many* and diverse forms of existence (in this world). This will become clearer as we proceed.

4

The Objective Analysis of the Macrocosm.
(i) Its *locus classicus* in the Gita.

We shall now proceed, after this bald indication of the metaphysical stand-point of the Gītā, to consider the metaphysical analyses therein. It is the pet method of Vedāntic Schools in Indian Philosophy to carry on a two-fold metaphysical analysis—of microcosm and the macrocosm of the subject and the object and then to identify the two principles reached though these analyses. Let us first follow the objective analysis—which is given in the seventh Chapter of the Gītā. The main texts of the Gītā doctrine on this head are the two following verses of the 7th adhyāya—

*Gītā is indebted, however, to both these systems for many ideas in its philosophy.

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥
अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥

"Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, understanding (intellect) and egoism (ego-sense),—thus is my nature divided eightfold. But this is a lower (form of my) nature. Know (that there is) another (form of my) nature, and higher than this, which is animate,* oh you of mighty arms! and by which this universe is upheld." (Telang).

Before we proceed to expound the theory epitomised in these two verses and other relevant passages in the Gītā, let us remind ourselves of the fact that the Gītā has at various places availed itself of the previous philosophies,—of the Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Vedānta schools in particular. To understand Gītā fully, we have therefore to draw upon various other texts, especially as Gītā takes so much for granted in the reader and its method being rather a popular one, its treatment of many problems is necessarily a curt or a fragmentary one. In regard to the subject in hand, Gītā has substantially appropriated the conclusions and terminology of the Sāṁkhya School and an exposition of it must, therefore, owe much to the Sāṁkhya system.†

(ii). The Para and the Apara Prakritis : The Nature and the Spirit.

In the verses quoted above, the Lord has distinctly stated the two aspects of His existence—the lower and the higher. Nature and Spirit are but the twin aspects of God's own Existence. The Sāṁkhya system considers the dualism of Nature and Spirit as irreducible but Gītā seeks to transcend this Dualism by declaring the two as together constituting God or the ultimate Reality. As Pope says—

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is and God* the soul.

But leaving aside this difference as regards whether the Dualism of Nature and Spirit or of Matter and Mind is ultimate, and that as regards the nature of the Self or spirit (to be considered later),—the procedure of the world analysis is substantially the same in the Gītā and the Sāṁkhya. It is the opinion of both that the world is a joint result of Nature and Spirit and how this is so will be seen below.

(iii) The Satkarya-vada : Conservation.

The Gītā and Sāṁkhya are both agreed as regards their doctrine that from nothing comes nothing —*ex nihils nihil fit.* नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यत सतः (ii. 16).† The world must have a real cause or else the world would not have been. Since there is the effect, there must be the cause and the latter must have in it, if potentially, all that the former exhibits in one form or other. Such a proportion may be seen to be very similar to that important scientific generalisation of the 19th century in the West which is generally termed as the "Conservation of Matter and Energy". This doctrine is called the Satkāryavāda in Sāṁkhya.

(iv) The original Prakriti and the Hypothesis of the Gunas.

The real cause of the present world behind all the appearances is the primitive matter or Prakṛiti out of which God fashions this world through the agency of his higher nature—the spirit. The whole world is

* जीवभूताम् means animate ; but it may as well mean,—and here it does—constituted by जीवस् i. e. Individuals or individual Selves.

† I owe here much to Tilak's chapter on Kāpila-Sāṁkhya-Śāstra in his *magnum opus* on the Gītā.

* Rather should we substitute "Spirit" for "God."

†"There is no existence for that which is unreal ; there is no non-existence for that which is real." (Telang).

a mere transformation of this original Prakṛiti. This Prakṛiti is originally homogeneous and subtle or unmanifest. How to explain this variegated world from this honogeneous cause? This is done by the Sāṁkhyas and the Gītā by the hypothesis of the "Guṇas" which mean literally quatities, but should be rendered as (differentiating) forces or principles. These forces are three in number—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These may be rendered into English as the principles of transparence and manifestation (Sattva), of attraction and activity (Rajas), and of opaqueness and inertia (Tamas). These principles or forces are inherent in the original Prakṛiti. Says the Gītā—सत्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः। (xiv. 5).—"Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are born from Prakṛiti." A free interplay of these different principles or forces gives rise to this variegated world. All objects in the world are mere permutations and combinations of these three qualities or principles in various proportions and in each of them all three are present more or less The world proceeds from and again returns to the original matter through the action of these three principles.* The province of all positive or natural sciences is to explain how this originally homogeneous matter becomes, by the action of these guṇas transformed into this variegated world. Jñāna or Wisdom is the knowledge that the Many proceeds from the One and Vijñāna or Science has to trace how it does so.

(v) Parallalism of the Nebular Theory.

In the West, Kant and Laplace have put forward the nebular hypothesis according to which there is at first one subtle, unmanifest, homogeneous matter from which this whole solar system—including all planets and stars — and all the phenomena within it have arisen. Darwin and others have applied the same idea within the realm of biology. From the homogeneous protoplasm comes the whole variegated world of life. In Sāṁkhya,—and in the Gītā, we have a theory essentially similar to this evolutionism of the West. These theories may differ in details but the underlying conception is essentially the same in both. The world has evolved from one primal cause in some ascertainable order. This is common to both. They differ only in the actual hypotheses adopted to explain this evolution. The Sāṁkhya says that the evolution apparently receives its spur from the action of the three principles,—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. The Western Scientist says that heat, motion, attraction, etc. are responsible for the evolutionary process. Of course, the latter hypothesis is easily intelligible, while the former is more or less an obscure one. But still, can we deny that they are in essence the same?

* The *original* source of motion is however, not anything phenomenal, but God Himself acting through His Higher Nature (Parāprakṛiti). See *infra*. p. 51f.

(vi) The Chain of Evolution : Inorganic and Organic.

To follow now the evolutionary chain.—We have seen that the original matter or Prakṛiti is inherently endowed with three forms of energy—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and that these principles are originally in perfect equilibrium and homogeneity. Now before any creation proper begins, there must be present a thought or purpose of creation. So the first ripple of change that arises on the original substratum or Prakṛiti by the action of the guṇas is the quality of intelligence. Intelligence arises from the orginal matter (and so do all other psychical functions, as we shall see). This may sound strange to Western readers, because, they habitually count intelligence on the spiritual or mental side. But let them take note of the recent tendencies in European and American Psychology, — which are definitely in the direction of

mitigating the spiritual, non-material character of the mental phenomena. I need only refer to books like, say Bertrand Russell's "Analysis of Mind" and J. B. Watson's "Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviourist."* And again we must note that the Prakṛiti of the Sāṁkhya is not exactly matter; it is more accurately rendered as "potentiality" or should be taken as matter in Plato's sense. I think, therefore, that nothing is unintelligible in intelligence arising from what it has ordinarily become more usual to render as "primitive matter."

This ripple of intelligent change, however, has not yet disturbed the original homogeneity of the Prakṛiti. This is done at the next step when the quality of "Ahaṁkāra" the ego-sense appears on the scene as a result of the further action of the guṇas. This is the principle by which for the first time the homogeneous primeval matter fulgurates into heterogeneity. It is this principle that constitutes the separateness of things, and is the "principium individuationis" of the Western Philosophy.

Till now, the qualities of intelligence and ego-sense have, however, not disturbed the unmanifest or rather the subtle (sūkshma) nature of the Prakṛiti. This latter is still far from being gross (sthūla). At the next step, the evolutionary process branches off into two directions—the Organic and Inorganic. The former is due to the preponderance of Sattva and is also subtle and the latter to that of Tamas and is, in its last phase, gross.

The organic section of creation is constituted by five organs of sense (nose, eye, ear, palate, and skin) and five

* Cf. "Many psychologists, especially those of the behaviourist school, tend to adopt what is essentially a materialistic position, as a matter of method if not of metaphysics. They make psychology increasingly dependent on physiology and external observation and tend to think of matter as something much more solid and indubitable than mind." Russell's *Analysis* (Preface).

organs of action (hands, feet, tongue, anus and penis) together with mind,—in all making the number of eleven. Now since each sense-organ can sense only one quality and only one (e. g. eyes can only see, not hear) and since there are only five sense-organs, the logical consequence is that on the inorganic side, we have to posit only five (sensible) qualities,—all corresponding respectively to the sense organs, viz.—sound (ear), touch (skin), form (eye), taste (palate) and smell (nose). Those five qualities as also all the evolutionary products before them are subtle. It is only at the next and last stage after this that these five subtle objective qualities (Tanmātrās) on the inorganic side by a certain process* become gross (sthūla) bodies called earth, water, light, air, and sky (or vacuum).

Now in the light of what has been said above, the quotation from the Gītā given before will, it is hoped, become more intelligible. There the Lord says—that earth, water, light, air, sky (or vacuum), mind, intelligence and ego-sense are his lower Prakṛiti. It is to be understood here that the Lord has included in mind besides itself also the five organs of sense and five organs of action. So the lower nature or Prakṛiti of the Lord is constituted by all the products of the natural evolution traced above.

(vii) The Presidency of the Lord.

The whole process of the evolution of Prakṛiti is however, presided over by the Lord. This is the distinctive doctrine of the Gītā and the Vedānta as distinguished from

* This process was called in the earlier Vedānta "Trivṛitkaraṇa" or Threefold-mixing and was developed in the later Vedānta into a doctrine of so-called "Pañchīkaraṇa" or Fivefold-mixing. This latter consists in dividing the one half of each of the elemental qualities into four (i. e. ⅛ of the total quality) equal parts and mixing each of the latter with each of the remaining halves of the qualities. We need not enter into an elaboration of this process here.

the Sāṁkhya. In the Sāṁkhya, Prakṛiti evolves itself ; it is its nature to exhibit itself in its myriad forms to the Purusha. The Purusha or the Spirit has nothing to do with it and is in reality indifferent to it. Not so in the Gītā. Here the Lord Himself conducts and guides the evolution of His Prakṛiti. In fact the Lord is the maintainer and energizer of all the happenings in the world. His Prakṛiti is not something to be set over against Him, as is virtually done in the Sāṁkhya. The Lord expresses Himself in and through the Prakṛiti. The infinite manifestations of the Lord have been described in the 10th Chapter of the Gītā and in some other places also,* the Lord has asked us to see Him everywhere. The Reality manifests itself and underlies all its appearances. Verily the Lord says—

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव। (vii. 7).

" All this is woven upon me, like numbers of pearls upon a thread. " (Telang).

(viii) The Para Prakriti : the "Demiurge. " '

Now as regards the second and the higher Prakṛiti of the Lord—which is given in the second of the verses taken as the text of this discussion—we have to note that it is called "Jīvabhuta." It is, therefore, of the nature of the Self or a spiritual principle. Just as the lower Prakṛiti represents the cosmic body, so the higher Prakṛiti represents the cosmic Soul or Self. The whole of the world is welded together into an organic unity† by this spiritual principle—which through the externality of the lower Prakṛiti functions as a veritable World-Soul. Plato has a similar conception of the body and the Soul of the world—the latter of which he calls the " Demiurge "—for which see his " Timaeus. " It is through the Soul that God gives the first impulse of movement to

* See, e. g. vi. 30 and 31 ; vii. 6, 7, 10, etc.

† ययेदं धार्यते जगत् (vii 5).

the world. Thus God in his own nature forms both the material and impulse to evolution.

(ix) The Net Result of it all.

What is then the net result of this objective metaphysical analysis ? We have found that the ultimate Reality—or in the language of the Gītā, God—manifests Itself in two forms, viz,—Nature and Spirit. The world is unintelligible but for it. It is an elaboration of the nature—higher and lower—of God or (metaphysically speaking) Brahman. The same ultimate principle when envisaged as the metaphysical Reality is called Brahman in the Gītā and is described variously and frequently as the Infinite, Changeless, Eternal, and so on. In his metaphysical mood it is natural for the author for the time being to give preponderance to static categories in the description of his reality, because the active relation of the latter to the world is kept temporarily in the background. But this must not be missed for the deeper thought of the author. Gītā does *not* stand for a *static* Absolute but for an *active* God. Speaking, however, in the moments of intense and exclusive metaphysical vision, the author is found to be speaking in the same unguarded fashion in which Plato has talked about his "Ideas." The Idea of the Good of Plato as well as the (Para) Brahman of the Gītā are the ultimate realities ; but both lose their distinictive significance if missed for simply dead hypostatised concepts. Both Plato and the Gītā have been unfortunate in that they give verbal grounds for misinterpretations. But a closer appreciation of the spirit of both will lead to the conclusion that both conceive God or Reality as the ground of explanation of the world and not as a transcendent something from which there is no return possible to the world. Gītā has eloquently described this immanence of God (xiii. 13)—

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

"It has hands and feet on all sides, it has eyes, heads and faces on all sides, it has ears on all sides; it stands pervading everything in the world."* (Telang). Or again —

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानां अचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ (xiii. 15)

" It is within all things and without them ; it is movable and also immovable ; it is unknowable through its subtlety ; it stands afar and near." (Telang).

5

The Subjective Analysis of the Microcosm : (i) Its *locus classicus* in the Gita.

God, then, is seen on the objective analysis, to be the single Principle pervading this big world of ours. Now this conclusion is to be corroborated and ratified by the subjective analysis. The objective analysis is called the Kshara-akshara-vichāra† and the subjective analysis is called the Kshetra-kshetrajñavichāra. This latter is discussed mainly in the 13th Chapter of the Gītā. The central texts of the Gītā§ doctrine on this head are the following verses—

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥
क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्व क्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ (xiii 1–2)

* Cf. "He sees all over, thinks all over, and hears all over." —Xenophanes (Burnet's translation in his *Early Greek Philosophy* p. 119).

† Kshara = Changeable i. e. the Nature or the Lower Prakṛiti.
Akshara = Unchangeable i. e. the spiritual Principle or the Higher Prakṛiti.

§ Kshetra = Body (lit. field).
Kshetrajña = Knower of the Body or individual Self.

महाभूतान्यहंकारो बुद्धिरव्यक्तमेव च ।
इंद्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेंद्रियगोचराः ॥
इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुःखं संघातश्चेतना धृतिः ।
एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ (xiii 5–6).

" This body, O Son of Kuntī, is called the Kshetra, and the learned call him who knows it the Kshetrajña. And know me also, Oh Descendent of Bharata, to be the Kshetrajña in all Kshetras. The knowledge of the Keshtra and the Kshetrajña is deemed by me (to be real) knowledge. The great elements, egoism, the understanding, the unperceived also, the ten senses, and the one, and the five objects of sense, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, body (collection or Saṁghāta), consciousness, courage, thus in brief has been declared the Kshetra with changes." (Telang).

(ii) Its Identification with the Macrocosm.

A glance at these verses is enough to show that the Kshetra and the Kshetrajña have been conceived there on the pattern of the two constituents—the Parā and the Aparā Prakṛitis—arrived at in the objective analysis. Microcosm is in essence the macrocosm And this is but natural. All finite creation must ultimately draw for its sustenance on the cosmic Prakṛitis of God and must therefore inherit the characteristic features of these. The elements on the organic and inorganic sides of the cosmic evolution (of the lower Prakṛiti) of God meet and constitute the organism or the Kshetra* but this Kshetra

* For space-considerations, we cannot undertake, here in our consideration of the Kshetra, a general sketch of the physiology and psychology—which Gītā borrows from the Sāṁkhya (along with its cosmology). This is not the Gītā's main interest. Suffice it to say here that to the Gītā (as to the Sāṁkhya), physiology and psychology are as if particular chapters in or applications of a general cosmology and therefore developed on the lines of the latter. Just as the fleeting ramifications of the lower Prakṛiti required the guidance and direction of the higher Prakṛiti in the largar or cosmic evolution, so in the psycho-physiological functioning of the individual organism or Kshetra the presidency of Kshetrajña is essential.

would be to no purpose if there were none to conduct or guide its finite development. Hence the necessity of the Kshetrajña or the Self—which is again a spark derived from the higher Prakriti of the same fontal Reality—God. Thus the individual also is an expression of the Lord's nature and glory even as the cosmos at large is. The same principle—viz. God or the Brahman—is found at the root of all. Objective analysis as well as the subjective, point to the same conclusion. The individual and the world are one. The microcosm and the macrocosm are one. Plato said in connection with his ethico-political theory that the larger whole of society is simply the individual writ large.* The Gītā and the Vedānta say the same in a different viz. metaphysical reference and declare that the cosmos is simply the individual. Says Professor Radhakrishnan—"In the spirit of the Upanishads, the Gītā identifies the two principles, the Ātman and the Brahman. Behind the fleeting senses and the body, there is Ātman; behind the fleeting objects of the world, there is Brahman. The two are one, being of indentical nature." "तत्त्वमसि"† "That thou art." Microcosm, as we would say, is in essence macrocosm.

6

The doctrine of "Uttama-Purusha."

Chapter XV of the Gītā is generally supposed to give us in a nutshell the distinctive features of the Gītā-philosophy. It is this Chapter in particular that every reader of the Gītā among Hindus likes and is learnt by heart by many.

* This he said in his *Republic*. But in his later work—the *Timaeus* he goes even further.—"The analogy between the individual and the state is no longer sufficient for the broadened range of Plato's thought; it is expanded into an anology between man and the universe."—Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*—Vol. III. p. 207.

† Chhāndogya, vi. 8.7.

The following two verses from that Chapter give us the quintessence of the Gītā-philosophy—

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षर सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥
उत्तमः पुरुषः त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्यदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ (xv. 16–17)

"There are these two beings in the world, the destructible and the indestructible (i.e. Aparā and Parā Prakṛitis: Nature and Spirit). The destructible (includes) all things; the permanent one is what is called the indestructible. But the Being Supreme is yet another, called the Highest Self, who as the inexhaustible Lord, pervading the three worlds, supports (them)." (Telang).

The two beings spoken of above are the same as Parā and Aparā Prakṛitis spoken of above. The higher Prakṛiti is called Akshara or changeless or indestructible, because it is the "Unmoved Mover"—the principle at the root of the evolution of the lower Prakṛiti. It is the principle that is charged with the divine mission of conducting, guiding and directing that evolution. It is the principle of teleology or purpose—a direct manifestation of God's activity. The lower Prakṛiti is called Kshara or destructible or changeable because of it being its nature with its unconscious teleology to undergo various processes and ramifications. It is these latter that the Akshara guides and directs with the hand of a conscious purpose. Finally, God or the Uttama-Purusha is the larger spiritual whole to which both these belong as the twin aspects and it is these twin aspects of God's nature that are ultimately responsible for the evolution of this variegated world. As Professor Radhakrishnan finely puts it—"The supreme is said to be possessed of two natures,—the higher or "Para" and the lower or "Apara" answering to the con-

scious and unconscious aspects of the Universe. The lower Prakriti produces effects and modifications in the world of nature or causes; the higher Prakriti gives rise to Purushas or intelligent souls in the world of ends or values. The two belong to one spiritual whole."*

7

A Retrospective Summary.

Such, then, in outline are the views of the Gītā on the chief metaphysical problems,—God, the World and the Self. God is equal to Reality as a whole and the latter two are aspects or "parts" (Aṁśas) of the Divine Being as the Gītā would call them. As regards the world, it should be noted that there is no suggestion in the Gītā that it is in any sense unreal or illusory. God himself creates it in His infinite power called "Māyā." The doctrine of Śaṅkara that the world in the Gītā's view is a mere troublous dream to be shaken off is a gross anachronism and is the consequence of a preconcieved theory of illusion (Māyā) and, superimposition (Adhyāsa). The very doctrine of Divine Incarnation † which the Gītā proclaims in unequivocal terms (to be discussed later) gives a direct lie to the illusion theory.§ How can God manifest Himself in a recognisedly illusory world ?

8

The Individual Souls

As regards the individual Souls, nothing can be more plain than that according to the Gītā, the Self is but a part of the Divine Existence—ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः (xv. 7). Or again—क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि etc. (xiii. 2). It is about this individual

* *Indian Philosophy*, i. 540.

† See *infra* Chapter V § 12.

§ For a brief elaboration of this point, see *infra* chap. v § 12 (iii).

soul that eloquent descriptions have been given in the second Chapter of the Gītā. This soul cannot die really. Death is a misnomer in that reference. Why should then Arjuna be afraid of "killing" his adversaries in order to fulfil his duty ? What is death after all ? Is it not simply a journey of the Soul from one set of physical conditions to another ? Says the Gītā in one of the Chapters—

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणः न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥
वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥
नैनं छिदन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापः न शोषयति मारुतः ॥
अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ (ii. 20–24)

"He is not born, nor does he ever die, nor, having existed, does he exist no more. Unborn, everlasting, unchangeable, and very ancient, he is not killed when the body is killed.....As a man, casting off old clothes, puts on others and new ones, so the embodied (Self), casting off old bodies, goes to others and new ones. Weapons do not divide the Self (into pieces); fire does not burn it; waters do not moisten it ; the wind does not dry it up. It is not divisible ; it is not combustible ; it is not to be moistened ; it is not to be dried up. It is everlasting, all-pervading, stable, firm, and eternal." (Telang).

In Ancient European Philosophy, Pythagoras taught a very similar doctrine which is called "Transmigration"* or "Metempsychosis" with which compare the above.

* "Pythagoras once heard a dog howling and appealed to its master not to beat it, as he recognised the voice of a departed friend. From this we know that he taught the doctrine of *Transmigration*." Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*. p. 84-5.

9

The Plurality of Selves.

As regards the *plurality* of Selves, there is a great difference of opinion among the interpreters of Gītā. Śaṅkara of course thinks that plurality cannot be defended. Rāmānuja, on the other hand thinks that the universe is meant by the Gītā to be constituted by a plurality of Selves, because the latter are the aspects of Divine Existence Itself. Both cite textual evidence (from the Gītā) in favour of their views. But it is really doubtful whether the Gītā-text can be supposed to countenance both of these latter. We cannot enter here into textual details, but we venture to think that the issue in such a doubtful case should rather be decided mainly on the *general line of thinking* of the Gītā.* We have now seen enough of what this line is, to know the exact bearing of it on the present question. The strong practical bent in the treatment of the various problems evinced in the Gītā make it improbable that the Gītā should mean an annihilation or merging of personality the end of it all! The Gītā has in two or three very brilliant passages† described the ultimate stage of human perfection that it is possible for every individual to reach and in all these the description is clearly couched in terms of individuality. In one place especially, the term मद्भावमागता: (iv–10)—"come into my essence" (Telang) has been used in this reference and is highly significant. It shows that in the Gītākāra's view, the plurality of Individuals is re-

* A merely textual study and interpretation of the Gītā is likely to miss its spirit. Gītā being cast in a verse and dialogue form, it is but natural that an expression here and another there should remain unguarded or even inaccurate.

† See, especially, the descriptions of a Sthitaprajña in the Second, a Bhakta in the Twelfth and a Triguṇātīta in the Fourteenth Chapters.

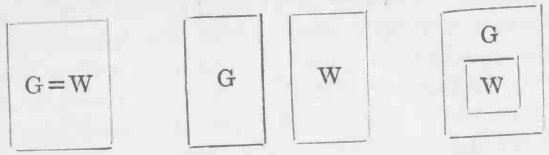
tained even in the ultimate stage or divine reference. And this is but natural and also true enough. For the moral and religious life which as we shall see the Gītā emphasizes so much, individuality is both the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*. Unless one holds a world-negating metaphysic—which we have no reason to attribute to the Gītā,—one cannot negate the moral and religious life and therefore, the individual. Bosanquet and Bradley, especially the latter, with their absolutist predilections have a constant tendency to deprecate moral and religious life. They have declared that morality and self-hood are inherently infected with self-contradiction and error. Śaṅkara's method is essentially similar. But he cannot be justified in ascribing his views for the Gītākāra is, as we have seen and will see more, too much of a value-philosopher to discard the significance of individuality in experience.

10

Spinoza, Sankara and the Gita.

Enough has perhaps now been said as regards the general nature of the metaphysical doctrine of the Gītā. We shall conclude this section with a few general remarks. We have said above that God manifests Himself in this world. Is this to be taken to mean that the Gītā teaches a system of pantheism of, say, Spinoza's type? Is God to be equated with the world? Is world the one and the only work of God? In other words, Is God purely immanent? This is a question that is variously answered. But in this writer's opinion, Gītā itself leaves very little doubt as regards its own predilections. Just as Gītā does not envisage the Śaṅkarite view of a complete *estrangement* of God (Reality) and the world, so also it does not countenance the Spinozistic view of an *equation* of them. If we could

indicate philosophical positions by diagrams, the following would be interesting in this connection—



Spinoza Śaṅkara The Gītā

That is to say whereas Śaṅkara holds that the world is *not* of the essence of reality, and again whereas Spinozism holds that the God and the world are *synonymous*, the Gītā holds that the world is a *real* aspect of God's Existence but does not exhaust the latter.* It would be human egotism to limit God's Power and Existence to this world only. Thus the Lord says that he is भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थः। (ix. 5). "All entities live in me; but I do not live in them." (Telang). Or again —विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्। (x. 42) "I stand supporting all this universe by (but) a single portion (of myself)." (Telang). Śrīkṛishṇa is thus frequently emphasizing the more transcendental aspects of his existence in the Gītā† and it is these passages taken together without their context that give a bit of plausibility to the purely transcendental interpretations of the Gītā. But if the general position set forth above is right, these latter cannot be accepted. All that these references really mean is that God is not exhausted by the world, although He is present

*The comparative positions of Spinoza, Śaṅkara and the Gītā could also be expressed by the term "pantheism" itself with the significantly varying emphises :—Spinoza : *Pan*theism (*All* is God or God everywhere); Śaṅkara : Pan*theism* (*God* is all—not the world—or God elsewhere) and the Gītā : *Pantheism* (All is Godward or God everywhere, as well as elsewhere).

† Besides the quotations given above, see also vii. 12, *et passim*.

in it. He is not a transcendent entity which having once created the world has nothing to do with it. He is not like an indifferent parent that takes no interest in the destinies of the little mite that he happened in long past to have brought forth. "He is in active and vital relations with the world, because the world constitutes an integral aspect of his own Being. He works in the world." As Dr. Bhandarkar puts it—"He is distinct from all objects, but dwells in them and controls them."* He is, that is to say, both transcendent and immanent.

11

The Personality of God : (i) The Meaning of Personality.

A word now as regards the personal or impersonal nature of the Gītā God. Is He Personal or Impersonal ? It is really very difficult to answer this question in an off-hand manner, for the meaning of the term—personality is very vague. With a slight change of senses, answers almost opposite to each other can be given to this query. For instance—Dr. Rashdall in his essay on "Personality—Human and Divine"† has tried to ascertain what is to be mainly understood by Personality and has tried to make out that the concept is capable of being ascribed to God. Professor A. E. Taylor, on the other hand, in his chapter§ on the "Place of Self in Reality" has laid it down that the strong out-going implications of the concept of Selfhood or Personality make its ascription to the ultimate Reality absurd. The Gītā nowhere has—and could not have-tackled the problem in any direct and explicit terminology of personality and selfhood. But the general trend of the Gītā thinking can certainly enable us to guess what should be the attitude

* "*Vaishṇavism Śaivism and other sects*," p. 159.

† "*Personal Idealism*" edited by H. Sturt.

§ "*Elements of Metaphysics*."

of the Gītā towards this problem. But what, first, shall we understand by the term personality? Personality and self-hood are essentially products—so Professor Taylor thinks—of development, and have their existence in the time series. But I do not think that this sense can be very relevant in metaphysics or philosophy. This latter views the world *sub specie æternitatis* and seeks to set forth our main experiences of the world in the order of their value. When it is said, for example, that the Absolute is a Society of *Selves* or *Persons*, the time aspect is essentially neglected. If we agree to this, we shall have to look up for the meaning of the term-Self or Person—elsewhere, rather than in its developmental aspect. I prefer to think of the possession of personality as essentially having, in some form, aspects of the spiritual life of human beings,—in reference to whom the validity of the concept of personality is as a rule never doubted. Knowledge, Purpose and Love are these three aspects of human life and these in my opinion constitute the essential meaning of the term personality. Having Knowledge, Purpose and Love in some sense is to have personality. Taken in this sense, it will be seen, the term personality will have no necessary implication of finitude, etc. We simply concentrate on certain ideals that personality reveals—apart from its local (and perhaps accidental?) aspects of finitude and development. Taking these former to be the significint essence of personality —can the Gītā God be said to be a Personal God?

(ii) The Gita Synthesis of Philosophy and Religion.

It must be noted in the first place that in the Gītā the ultimate Reality or the Absolute of metaphysics and God of Religion are identical. There the metaphysics and religion have met together and merged. The term Purushottama stands for both,—Brahman and God. The result is that in its descriptions of the Supreme

there seem to be two distinct lines of opinion—one abstract the other more concrete. When there is the metaphysical afflatus upon the author, his tendency is towards the abstract and the negative. The supreme is then above and beyond all comprehension, and cannot be described. Of such a tendency is, for instance, the following verse—

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ (vii. 24)

"The undiscerning ones, not knowing my transcendent and divine essence than which there is nothing higher, think me, who am unperceived, to have become perceptible."* (Telang). And considering the transcendent nature of God, this is a good admonition for the rebellious and proud intellect of mankind. मां तु वेद न कश्चन । (vii. 26). "Me none knows." But if the truth is not be sacrificed, the counter-stroke must also be given. If God is transcendent, He is not purely transcendent, either; He is also immanent. The abstract Absolute is also the Living God. And to this God all that is of the highest value in our human life and experience may be safely ascribed. Krishna has told us virtually (in the verse quoted above on page 44, x. 41) that what is best may always be referred to Him. Our ideals are our clues to God. And if this is so, then Personality may surely be ascribed to Him. What is Personality but a repository of our ideals of Knowledge, Purpose, and Love? And ascribing personality to God means nothing else than referring these features, or in more abstract terms, our ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness to God as their fontal source and sustainer. The same Supreme which on the other side (transcending our experience) is said to be incomprehensible and baffling all categories drawn from experience—including Personality

* *Et passim.*

—the same Supreme on this side reveals Itself as the source and realisation of our highest ideals and therefore capable of being described as, in the highest sense, a Personality. There is nothing unintelligible or illogical here. The Gītā really presents us here a bold, if in a sense mystical, synthesis of Philosophy and Religion and reconciles the claims of the Head and the Heart. As Professor Radhakrishnan says—" The Impersonal Absolute is envisaged as Purushottama for the purposes of religion. The idea of Purushottama is not a wilful self-deception accepted by the weak heart of man. While the dry light of reason gives us a featureless Reality, spiritual intuition reveals to us a God who is both personal and impersonal. "*

12

The Doctrine of Incarnation : (i) Its *locus classicus* in the Gita.

We shall add a few words on the Gītā doctrine of Divine Incarnation and pass on to the Ethical side of the Gītā philosophy.—As said on page 58 above, the Gītā doctrine of Divine Incarnation is incompatible with a strict absolutist theory and is one of the grounds for holding that the Gītā does not preach the latter theory. We give below the *locus classicus* of the incarnation doctrine of the Gītā (iv. 7–8)—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

" Whenever, Oh descendent of Bharata, piety (Dharma) languishes and impiety is in the ascendent, I create

* *Op. cit.* p. 542.

myself. I am born, age after age, for the protection of the good ; for the destruction of evil-doers and the establishment of piety." (Telang).

(ii) Its meaning.

This, then, is the famous doctrine of Avatāra or Incarnation in the Gītā. It means simply God's descent (Avatāra) to redeem Humanity. The Divine is manifest everywhere in the world, but in some things, it is *more* so than in others. An unusual charging of a human personality by the Divine is Avatāra or Descent. Throughout the history of man, there have been such Avatāras,—a Krishṇa, a Christ, a Nanak and so on. Whenever there is a spiritual chaos (अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य), whenever the Dharma begins to become dim, when the spiritual vision of humanity becomes defective, God descends into humanity and guides her to His spiritual haven by His Personal Presence. He becomes the Saviour, the Redeemer in order that Humanity might follow Him and be like Him. He descends in order that Humanity might ascend. He becomes a Krishṇa so that an Arjuna might be saved and redeemed. But this Divine work of redeeming (as said above) is going on ceaselessly throughout human history. God descends into diverse places and at diverse times and in diverse manners. The purpose is the same,—viz. restoration and conservation of the spirituo-moral order and values by stimulating Dharma in Humanity by His Divine, yet Personal, Presence. As Ghose says more than once in his brilliant *Essays on the Gītā* (page 203)—" It (Avatāra) is the manifestation from the above of that which we have to develop from below...It is the attracting Divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence."

(iii) **Its metaphysical Significance.**

The unequivocal proclamation of this truth,—viz. the process of Divine Incarnation,—however on the part of the Gītā, be it here incidentally noted, is one of the clearest indications of the non-Śaṅkarite character of the Gītā-conceptions. Acceptance of the Incarnation Doctrine is, strictly speaking, incompatible with the thoroughgoing transcental Absolutism of Śaṅkara. If the ultimate Reality or Brahman cannot be said to have any intellgible relation with the world of appearances or Māyā (as is affirmed in the Neo-Vedānta of Śaṅkara's school), how can the Reality be supposed to plant its very essence therein i. e. in the Māyika or the illusory world, as is required in the incarnation process. Even interpreting the Vedāntic Absolutism, as is not seldom done, as a system of Spinozistic Pantheism i. e. if the world is equal to God, still the Avatāravāda (Incarnationism) is not compatible with it, as it essentially requires that the Divine should charge with Its presence certain beings *more* than others or else there will be no Avatāra (Incarnation) but only a Vibhūti (manifestation). Vedānta, therefore, whether of the Śaṅkarite type (transcendental) or the Spinozistic (immanental), cannot be the philosophy of the Gītā which preaches Avatāravāda. Gītā supports only that Vedānta according to which Reality or God is both immanent and transcendent. Vedānta is to be taken in this sense when, e. g., Ghose says (*Op. cit.* p. 194), "The Idea of Avatāra is not indeed indispensable to its i. e. (Vedanta's) scheme, but it comes in naturally into it as a perfectly rational and logical conception."

13

Conclusion.

This should now be enough to give a general idea of the *speculative* or *metaphysical* philosophy of the Gīta. We have seen

that the God or the Absolute is the *one* Reality which Gītā upholds and we have also seen how this reality is *not exclusive* of but manifests or expresses itself into its *many* Vibhūtis (or manifestations). The Reality is therefore both *One and Many.* Such a view is very similar to the view held, e. g., by Professor John S. Mackenzie* in England. "Cosmism" (or "Axiological Idealism") is his very apt nomenclature for it and we have accepted it in our interpretation-table before on page 40 to describe what was then our hypothesis about the teaching of the Gītā. I now hope that the hypothesis put forward there has recommended itself to the reader as a reasonable and the correct view of the *speculative* or *metaphysical* philosophy of the Gītā.

*See the last part of his "*Elements of Constructive Philosophy*"—and his more recent publication—"*Ultimate Values.*"

CHAPTER VI

The Ethics of the Gītā

1

We now proceed to the *practical* or the *ethical* (and *religious*) philosophy of the Gītā, which we shall now treat as briefly as possible.

The Ethical Significance of the Gita.

The Ethical side of the teachings of the Gītā can never be over-emphasized. The main problem of the Gītā is essentially *ethical*. It is a Yoga-Śāstra. The story of its birth at a very critical moment in the life of an historic personality is alone sufficient to convince one of this remark and this latter is now coming to be recognised more and more in modern times. Śaṅkara was mainly responsible for the long continued neglect of the ethical significance of the Gītā and it is really by a curious stroke of irony that in recent times an occupant of Śaṅkara's own gādi—I refer to Dr. Mahabhagavat of Kurtakoti—has joined with all his heart the ethical interpreters of the Gītā. His Doctorate thesis on the Gītā is written with the side aim of investigating and bringing out "the value of the Gītā as a guide to practical life." (p. 7). Finally we know how much Tilak has done to shake off the old worn-out prejudices about Gītākāra the ethicist.

2

Morality and Religion together in the Gita "Dharma."

Ethics has mainly to deal with the Idea of the "God." It has to take into consideration all sides of human life and experience and by the method of immanent criticism, it has to lay down a certain norm, end or

ideal to be realised in human life and conduct. A whole-hearted pursuit of this ideal is moral life and the same coupled with a sense of reverential love and awe for—or in broader terms, with an emotional relation with—the ideal is called religious life. For in the ultimate analysis, there is no real bifurcation between morality and religion. Religion is "morality touched with Emotion," saidMatthew Arnold. They are the two names for the same essential fact of human life,—considered in terms of impersonal ratiocination and proof or a personal intuition and love. In Indian philosophy, this essential unity of Ethics and Religion is brought out by a single word "Dharma" which means both morality and religion. In the Gita, especially, we have abundant proofs for our view that morality and religion are ultimately one and the same. The task before Arjuna was at once his Duty and God's will. Ethics and religion in Gītā are almost synonymous and will, therefore, be discussed together.

3

The Genesis of the Gita's Ethical Problem.

How does the moral problem of the Gītā arise? So long as there are customs and tradition guiding men in their practical life there is no moral problem at all for them. Every society has its own "ἔθος" (manners or customs) the observance of which means ἦθος (Lat. *mores*, morality). And moral reflection arises only when there is a conflict between the different aspects of a people's "ἔθος" At the time of the Mahābhārata also, we must suppose, there was an established system of the social "ἔθος". There was, e. g. the ancient Indian fourfold class system,* the "Chāturvarṇya" based on men's

* Compare with this the very similar conception of Plato's *Republic*—where he upholds a threefold class-system—guardians auxiliaries and artisans—based on, as Gītā would say, "Guṇakarma" (capacity and function). Plato's third class conprises the third and fourth of the Gītā.—See Plato's *Republic*-esp. Book IV *et foll.*

capacity and function, "Guṇakarma." Culture, Defence, Maintenance, and Service were the chief functions to be served in a society. The second of these—Defence or Protection against injustice or violence—was Arjuna's, and this was quite obvious. But for a moment, this obvious duty was thrown into the background and another aspect of the situation came to the front. It was the idea of killing his kith and kin in the war that was before him. It meant to him simple and unmitigated cruelty and bloodshed, and this for the sake of something the value of which perhaps did not sanction all this. "Much it grieved his heart to think what man had made of man." (Wordsworth). If doing war was a social function and therefore a duty, so also were kindness and love for all life,—forgiveness even to the erring. These latter also were prescribed by the social "ἔθος." Thus there arose a conflict in his mind between his duties as a warrior and his duties as a "man." As a warrior he wanted to vindicate individual and social justice and as a "man" wanted to forgive his dear, though erring, brethren. With such conflicts in one's mind comes to birth a moral *philosophy*, as distinct from a moral *code*. For a man of Arjuna's development and calibre, the time had come, when a mere set of established moral rules had no power to satisfy him and he wanted to go to the root of the matter behind these conventional and apparently dogmatic formulae and see for himself whether there be any *critical justification* of these. In other words, he wanted a moral philosophy not a moral, code. A moral code taken seriously always leads to a moral philosophy; ἔθος to ἦθος or "Mores."

4

Some Characteristics of the Gita Solution.

The solution of the problem (the Genesis of which we sketched above) as is offered by the Gītā is a twofold one. On the one hand, Gītā gives character-sketches of

the ideal "Man;" and on the other, it gives descriptions and justifications of the Ideal itself. We shall utilise both these in the following account of the Gītā Ethics.

One of the first impressions left on one's mind by a perusal of the ethical teachings of the Gītā is its wonderful catholicity of outlook and a spirit of toleration for all creeds and sects. The sacrificial and ritualistic Ethics of the Mīmāñsakas, the ascetic ethics of the Vedāntists and the Buddhists, the devotional Ethics of other schools, etc. are all accepted in part and yet absorbed in its reconciling, yet original, synthesis. The Gītā ideal is, further, not a static concept, a rigid law which is no respecter of the moral aspirant—but is an ideal which admits of a variety of approaches and has a variety of aspects admitting of individul choice and adaptation. Further, whatever the external form of action, the Gītā asks us to go behind to the attitude, intention or motive underlying the activity and to find moral value there, rather than in the external ceremonialism of a particular creed. In this single thought the Gītā evinces a wonderful toleration for differing people and opens up a possibility for their unification.

5

The Gita's Practical or Ethico-Religious Ideal.

What then is the practical (moral and religious) ideal of the Gītā? According to the Gītā philosophy, God is more or less present in all things. This we have seen. Now the bearing of this upon its practical philosophy—one's *Ethics* are determined by one's *Metaphysics*—is that the practical or ethical end becomes the fulfilment or satisfaction of all the aspects or sides of the life of the Self according to their nature and value. "The moral ideal is a state of well-being. The well-being which in a calm hour we desire is always an abiding satisfaction

of an abiding Self."* Gītā generally casts its conceptions in a more philosophico-religious language. Its ideal is described variously as Brāhmī-sthiti, Brahma-Saṁsthā, Brahma-nirvāṇa, Brahma-saṁsparśa etc. God or Brahman being the sole ultimate value, we must assert the same in our own personality and human consciousness must function as God-consciousness. The Highest life is a life of Self-realisation in the highest sense. It is a divine life in which all things are done as if by and for God. This is the life of a Sthitaprajña. It is an all-round fulfilment of God through man. " It (the Ethical ideal of the Gītā) is union or assimilation with Brahman in action, acting from the divine standpoint,—in the same way as God does."† In short, " union with the Highest through Logic, Love and Life"§ is the only absolute value, the realisation of which is the practical ideal set forth before us by the Gītā. As Professor Radhakrishnan puts it— " The end is the harmonious efficiency of the several sides of our life by which truth is attained, beauty created and conduct perfected."‡

6

Some Western Parallels—The Gita's "Three Paths."

This is then the practical Ideal of the Gītā. It can be variously described as Perfectionism, Eudæmonism, Self-realisation, etc. The meaning is the same. It is the view which Plato and Aristotle held in ancient times in Europe and it is also the view that Butler and the modern Ethical Idealists, such as Green and others, on the whole, are inclined to hold. Quite in recent times,

* Fairbrother's *Philosoyhy of T. H. Green* — p. 80. See also Green's *Prolegomena*, Sec. 171.

† S. Tattvabhushan's *Kṛishṇa and the Gītā* p. 348.

§ Professor Radhakrishnan's phrase.

‡ *Op. cit.* i. 553.

Dr. Rashdall's Ethics of the *total* well-being comes very near to the view of the Gītā. But the affinity of the Gītā-ethics to that of Plato in particular is startling. Plato's ideal, for the individual as well as for the state, was justice and by justice he simply meant the harmonious working of all the three aspects of the individual's mental life or that of the corresponding classes of the society, which is simply the individual writ large.* The same harmony is the Gītā's ideal for the individual (and the society). Cognition, affection and conation—which are the three broad aspects of human life—are all to be developed to perfection and none excluded or neglected. Yet persons may differ in their individual psychical make-up and all the three aspects of their mental structure (though all must be present in every one) may not be equally or uniformly perfectible. Hence arise types of men according to the predominance of this or that aspect—cognition, conation or affection. Some may *know* God; others *serve* Him; others still *love* Him. The ideal realised is the same. The Paths followed may be different according to the individual's peculiarity and approach. These again are not mutually exclusive but are essentially overlapping and mutually complementary. The names that the Gītā literature gives to these paths are " Jñāna-Yoga " (the Path of Reason or Knowledge), " Karma-Yoga " (the Path of the Acting or Service) and " Bhakti-Yoga " (the Path of Love or Devotion).† We shall say a few words on each of these.

*See for further details Plato's *Republic*, especially, Book IV, *et foll.*

†Dr. Kurtakoti (op. cit.—p. 20) says—"The Gītā classifies religious aspirants into four broad divisions—the active man, the emtional man, the mystic and the man of reason."—But such a view has *no* evidence in the Gītā and is psychologically unsound. Nor has Dr. Kurtakoti cited any reasons for his view. My own view is that the mystic (Dhyāna-Yogin) as the Gītā understands it can be assimilated to either the reasonable or the emotional type of the Gītā and that it has not been meant by the Gītā to be a separate type. Gītā recognises only those three classes which correspond to the Yogas given in the text. Of course, Dr. Kurtakoti also is right if we leave out his " mystic " class.

7

The Jnana-Yoga or the Path of Knowledge. (i) Its Nature and Significance.

"Jñāna-Yoga" is the perfection or the satisfaction of the impulse to know in man. Knowledge is the distinctive gift of man and his most valued possession. Highest Knowledge, besides giving a right perspective of things, leads to the liberation of the Self. Says Krishna (xiv. 1)—

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।
यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥

"I will again declare (to you) the highest knowledge, the best (of all sorts) of knowledge, having learnt which all Sages have reached perfection beyond (the bonds of) this (body). (Telang). Knowledge is of two kinds, knowledge of the one in the many i. e. "Jñāna" (wisdom); and the knowledge of the many in one i. e. "Vijñāna" (science). The one is intuitive; the other is ratiocinative. All knowledge, however, is one after all; all knowledge is the knowledge of God and Gītā is never tired of praising the value of real knowledge. Action itself—on which Gītā lays such an emphasis, as we shall see later—without knowledge is blindness. Gītā is very rigorous in its condemnation of the superficial ceremonialism of the Mīmāṅsakas. For instance—

यावानर्थः उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ (iv. 37)

"To an instructed (or wise) Brahmin, there is as much utility in the (ceremonialistic or ritualistic) Vedas—(there is none, such is the sense), as there is in a well or reservoir when there are floods of water everywhere." (Tilak). Our aim should, therefore, be not keeping to the word or letter of the Vedas, but rather to assimilate their spirit.

The different sacrifices prescribed and described in the Vedas are to be interpreted as so many philosophical "symbolisms."* In fact the idea of "Yajña" sacrifice, is so enlarged and generalised by the Gītā as to cover all activity done for the attainment of the Supreme. And of all these latter, knowledge is held in very high estimation. Says the Lord (iv. 33)—

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥

"The sacrifice of knowledge, Oh Terror of your foes, is superior to the sacrifice of material things; for action, O Son of Pṛithā, is wholly and entirely comprehended in knowledge." (Telang, with changes). Or, again, vide the following description of "Jñāna" in terms of the sacrificial symbolism itself—

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्व कर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ (iv. 37)

"As fire well-kindled, O Arjuna, reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes." (Telang).

To the Karmins also, therefore, knowledge is the essential thing. Mere Karma-yoga divested of Jñāna is a soulless mechanism. Karman must be saturated and distilled by knowledge. Nor is Bhakti-yoga complete without knowledge. Of all the Bhaktas, one with knowledge is the best. Says the Gītā. (vii 17–18)—

तेषां (भक्तानां) ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
... ...
उदाराः सर्व एवैते (भक्ताः) ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ॥

"Of these (devotees), he who is possessed of knowledge, who is always devoted, and whose worship is (addressed)

* Ghose's word in his *Essays on the Gītā*.

to one (Being) only, is esteemed highest..... All these are noble. But the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own Self." (Telang).

Knowledge in fact is essential to all ethical culture and is the pancea of all life's troubles and is the holiest thing in the world. Says the Gītā (iv. 36-38)—

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ।
... ...
नहि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

"You will cross over all difficulties (or sins) by means of the boat of knowledge alone.....For there is in this world no means of sanctification like knowledge." (Telanga, with changes).

(ii) How to attain it : The Value of Service and Humility.

How to attain such knowledge, a sort of knowledge for which Gītā thinks no praise to be too high? Real knowledge is not to be had by merely study or investigation. All spiritual truths are revealed by personality to personality. Strange as it may sound to modern ears, real knowledge or wisdom is always an intuition transmitted by one individual to another! Wisdom cannot be caught in a dead letter or a formula; it is something that mere words cannot convey, books cannot teach. Plato in one of his dialogues—"Phædrus"—has broached this question and has rightly tried to establish the superiority of *spoken* over *written* word. The written word, like a rigid law, takes no account of the individual who is to be its recipient. Hence the need of individual instruction, especially in matters of spirituality. There the spirit instructs spirit.—Yet mere external instruction will not do. The pupil's mind must be equipped to receive it. Wisdom is not something that is objectively accessible to the high and the low alike. Wisdom demands

humility and purity of heart in the recipient. Hence the necessity of a life of service. Gītā, therefore, asks us to approach a real spiritual master in a spirit of humility and serve him as a matter of spiritual discipline so as to hold in due time, with him a sort of direct spiritual communion. Says the Gītā (iv. 34)—

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

"That you should learn by *salutation*, *question* (investigation) and *service*; men of knowledge who perceived the truth will teach knowledge to you." (Telang).

Gītā also recognises the value of faith and self-control in the life of the aspirant. Mere skepticism saps all vitality of life and thought. "Faith is great; life-giving," said Carlyle. Further, the true is also the good and to realise the truth, one must be good. As the Gītā has it—श्रद्धावांल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेंद्रियः । (iv. 39)—"The man of faith who is persevering and has controlled the senses attains knowledge." (Kurtakoti). Such a life, then, of service and humility, faith and self-control is the life that ultimately equips or qualifies one for the final conversion of the Soul which is necessary for the perception of the spiritual truth. Gītā prescribes a system of Yogic practices to discipline mind for this consummation. These are principally described in the VIth Chapter and the aim of them all is stilling the rebellious mind and the senses by a systematic sublimation and concetration of them on the supreme by means of self-control and self-culture. But all these are means, and not the end and the Gītā is conscious of this fact. Anything is as good as another if only it induces the final God-vision which issues in a God-life. It is a vision and a life—in which "He (the aspirant) sees me everywhere and sees everything

in Me." (vi. 30). This is the ultimate knowledge to which Jñāna-yoga leads. It means the knowledge of God or Brahman as the unity behind all phenomena percieved by the logical intellect of man. It means the knowledge of the unity of the microcosm and macrocosm, of the "That thou art" of which we spoke above (p. 56).

8

The Bhakti-Yoga or Path of Love (i) Its significance.

The Path of Knowledge despite its wonderful excellence is suited to abstract intellects. Knowledge of God as the supreme unity of phenomena is vouchsafed to a few gifted intellects and only after a good deal of the effort of abstract understanding. The unity is not apparent on the face of the world and its realisation requires one to undergo a testing drill of meditative self-culture. Says the Gītā, (xii. 5).—क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम्—"For those whose minds are directed to the unperceived (abstract), the trouble is much greater." (Telang, with changes). The effort of hard thinking is impossible for many. Bhakti-yoga (Path of Love or Devotion) is verily a path that is suited to all,—even the ignorant and the lowly. Gītā calls it the Royal-lore-Royal-secret (Raja-vidyā-Rāja-guhya). Says the Gītā (ix. 32)—

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

"O Son of Pṛithā, even those who are one of sinful birth' women, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras likewise, resorting to me, attain the supreme goal." (Telang).

(ii) Its nature.

What, then, is this Bhakti-yoga which promises us to save all? It is the Perfection of the emotional side of Man. It is the God-ward sublimation of the "ἔρως" or Love in Man.* The Gītā thus declares itself distinctly against that sort of ethics which aims at annihilating all feeling and sensibility. Feeling, emotion are neither good nor bad in themselves. It is there object that determines their moral value. Feeling which is unopposed to real pietv or "Dharma" is not only not objected to by the Gītā, but is expressly declared to be good and desirable (vii. 11)—धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।—"I am that Love among beings which is not opposed to piety." (Telang, with changes).

The nature of Bhakti preached in the Gītā is essentially the same as in other religions. It is the Love and Worship of God with all means at your command. As the Gītā says—

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौंतेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ (ix. 27)

"Whatever you do, O Son of Kuntī, whatever you eat whatever sacrifice you make, whatever you give, whatever penance you perform, do that as offered to me." (Telang).

One offers one's whole personality to the Beloved God. Further the Bhakta has complete faith in his God and he resigns himself to His care. Supreme devotion and supreme self-surrender—Bhakti and Prapatti—are the highest Goals of a Bhakta.

(iii) The God and the Bhakta.

Of course, the God who is the object of devotion is a God in some sense and at least to begin with distinct from the Bhakta. However closely love may unite, the Lover and the Beloved remain distinct.† In the Bhakti-

* Plato in his *Symposium* has given, in Socrates' speech on Love, a brilliant description of the sublimation of Love towards the Highest Beauty. If for the latter, we substitute God, the description in many respects resembles that of Bhakti in the Gītā.

† Radhakrishnan—*Op. cit.* p. 559.

yoga, the Brahman of Jñāna-yoga is envisaged as Purushottama. It is this symbolisation of Brahman as Purushottama which has adopted Jñāna-yoga for the feebler intellects. But this adaptation is no mitigation of truth. Purushottama is the Brahman Itself. And the distinctness too between God and Bhakta, we must suppose, is a vanishing one. When the devotion is perfected, then the individual and his God become suffused into one spiritual ecstasy. Bhakti-yoga is not incompatible with Monism; only it is not an absolute, but a transfiguard monism that it upholds. God and Bhakta can infinitely overlap; yet Bhakta *as such* cannot be observed in Divine Existence and yet again the former is not a limitation of the latter. It must be confessed that there is something mystical here; but perhaps actual life rather than speculation must solve such problems of the relation of God and man. In the meanwhile, the suggestions of the Gītā as regards the non-contradiction of monism and devotion deserves our respectful consideration.

(iv) Tolerance in the Gita Bhakti.

The attitude of tolerance which is the characteristic note of the Gītā religion is brought out especially in its Bhakti-yoga. The Devotee may pray or worship any Deity and yet that prayer or worship reaches the One who is the God of Gods. That is how Gītā makes room for all faiths and creeds. It is here that Gītā can claim to be putting forward a *universal religion.* To Christians Christ is the only Saviour. Islam holds Mahomet to be the only Prophet of God. Hinduism of which Gītā is a typical exposition is not so exclusive but recognises Divinity wherever found. The Doctrine of the Ten Divine Incarnations is a standing testimony of this assimilative power and vitiality of the Hindu religion.* I give below a

* See H. D. Bhattacharjis article on "The Vitality of Hindu Religion" in No. IV of the "Philosophical Quarterly," (January 1926), where he has elaborated this point.

few texts from the Gītā on which the above remarks have been based—

येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥ (ix. 23)

"Even the devotees of the other Devatās, who worship with faith, are really worshipping Me in an indirect manner." (Kurtakoti, with changes).

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ (ix. 11.)

"Whoever take refuge in Me in whatever form, I take them into My service in that form. Men follow My path, O son of Prithā, in all manner of ways." (Kurtakoti, with changes).

(v) The Godward Sublimation.

The Path of Bhakti, as we said, is one of systematic Godward sublimation of our affective nature. This is done by a renunciation of the lower objects of our passions and desires and substituting for them objects, higher and higher. Mere outward renunciation however, will not do. That would be hypocrisy, *mithyāchāra* (iii. 6). Not enjoying lower pleasures is not the right thing to be aimed at; it is a merely negative attitude. Not wanting them and being above them is the more proper attitude. And this is done by steadily concentrating on the Supreme. As the Gītā graphically puts it (ii. 59)—

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥

"Objects are removed from the embodied (being), who does not take them in (through the senses) but not so the love of objects, even love is removed after having seen the Highest (Love)." (Kurtakoti).

No desires or passions can perturb the peace of a man who has controlled himself by concentration on the Para or the Highest. He is the master of them all; not they his. Infinite peace belongs to him. As the Gītā puts it in its wonderful imagery (ii. 70)—

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

"As the streams of water enter the sea which is constantly filled on all sides and yet stands unmoved, so into whom-so-ever enter all desires (without affecting him) he alone attains peace, not the man who has all sorts of desires." (Kurtakoti).

(vi) "God is Love."

Such a man does all that he does for his God, and Divinity touches his being at every point and transforms it all. Eternal Communion and Love of the Beloved God is promised to him. To God none is dearer than such a Bhakta. The following texts can match any world's religious or revealed literature for their deep religious feeling and the love of mankind wich are evinced in them;—to Hinduism *also*, let us note, "God is Love."—कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति। (ix. 37)—"This is my word of promise, O Kaunteya, that he who loveth Me shall not perish." (Radhakrishnan); or vide the climax in the following (xviii. 65-66)—

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

"Merge thy mind in Me, be thou My devotee, prostrate thyself before Me, thou shalt come even unto Me. I pledge thee My troth, thou art dear unto Me. Abandoning all the Dharmas, come unto Me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins." (Radhakrishnan). Even to the fallen and the wicked, the Gītā has a word of hope and love (ix. 33)—

अपि चेत् सुदुराचारो भजते मां अनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥

"Even if a very ill-conducted man worships Me, not worshipping anything else, he must certainly be deemed to be good, for he has well resolved." (Telang).

(vii) Concluding Remarks.

Passages bearing on the Bhakti are too many, all to find a place in our brief discussion here. We recommend the IXth and XIIth chapter in particular to the reader in this connection. The Ideal of Bhakti that is painted in the Gītā is of such a transcendent merit that it can verily be declared to be one of the world's best Bhakti gospels. It sees God everywhere, and sees eveything in God!

Gītā's ethical Ideal, however, is not a one-sided one. Even a Bhakta has need of knowledge; a Jñānin Bhakta is preferred by God, as said above. So also activity is demanded of the Ideal Man. Says Prof. Radhakrishnan (*Op. cit.* p. 565)—"The ideal devotee of the Gītā is one in whom love is lighted up by knowledge and bursts forth into a fierce desire to suffer for mankind." We proceed, therefore, to Karmayoga or the Path of Activity.

9

The Karma-Yoga or the Path of Service: (i) Its distinctive Significance.

It is this doctrine that is a distinct and original contribution of the Gītā to the evolution of Hindu ethical theory. "Knowledge" and "Devotion" are both of them to be found in the pre-Gītā ethical speculations. "Karman" also was there already; but the peculiar

meaning and significance that Gītā gives to Karman make its doctrine quite an independent and an original one. It is also this aspect of the teaching of the Gītā which was relevant to the problem before Arjuna and which, therefore, Krishṇa has taken pains to philosophically vindicate.

We shall here treat of "Karmayoga" as briefly as possible, as so much has now been written upon it by Tilak and others. We shall also avoid quotations in this section as there are too many passages in the Gītā bearing on this subject. We make here a general reference especially to the III, IV and Vth chapters and to the last part of the XVIIIth chapter where the whole problem is brilliantly summed up and concluded. We shall present below in their logical sequence—not found in the Gītā—the main propositions of the Gītā Karma-yoga.

(ii) The Gita Criticism of Inactionism.

Gītā develops or constructs its own thesis through a criticism of the previous theories of actions. It has first to establish the inevitableness and obligation of Karman in opposition to the apostles of inaction in the past. Karman lies at the root of the whole world ; but for Karman, the world would not have been. Not a moment passes but there is Karman. Karman,— action, change,— they are the very law of life ;* and their cessation would be the cessation of all life. Even bare bodily maintenance requires Karman. It is vain to avoid Karman. †

* Compare the Heraclitean saying—"All things are flowing."—Burnet, *op. cit.* p. 146.

† This must not be interpreted as "Determinism of Nature" according to the Gītā. Gītā does recognise the Soul's superiority to the mechanically determined will. Human freedom is real ; the Self has to elevate itself. Arjuna, with the whole gospel of Krishṇa before him, was yet asked to do as *he* chose. "Karman is only a condition—not a destiny."

Nor is there anything man-made here. God Himself ordained that Karman should keep the circuit of the world going and it is, therefore, an obvious obligation to help in our own way the working of the world. Inaction would be the frustration of the Divine Purpose in us and a sin on our part. Action, therefore, is to be preferred to inaction under all circumstances.

Nor does action come in the way of one's spiritual perfection and liberation of the Self. Karman done in a spirit of Yajña (sacrifice) i. e. as a means to the realisation of the Supreme cannot be a bondage. Janaka and others attained perfection, even when they were in the midst of Karman, and even because of it.

Nor is mere cessation of Karman as such real inaction. A mere external or forced renunciation of Karman is itself a Karman. All depends on the inner attitude or motive which is more important than or even superior to Karman as such. There can be action in inaction and inaction even in action.

Further, an example set forth of inaction would have a disastrous effect on the people. People follow the examples of the Knowing and the Great. If these latter be inactive, the common and the undiscerning would imitate and cease working even for their own uplift.

Nor do work and action mean or imply any incomplete, unsatisfied purpose or desire and therefore an imperfection. Work is compatible with the Highest Perfection or Blessedness of the working individual. God Himself works and yet it cannot be said that He has any unaccomplished end, except perhaps it be setting an example to and saving people through Love and Work. A Perfect Being necessarily loves the ignorant and the imperfect, and works for them.

Demonstrating in this way the necessity and obligation of the Karman in opposition to the inactionists, Gītā also gives, on the other hand, a demonstration of the futility of the Karman-doctrine as understood by the Mīmāñsakas and others of their opinion. Karman done for personal ends and irrespective of the commands of the (moral) science (śāstra) admittedly leads to bondage; but even the sacrificial or ceremonial Karman, so the Gītā in the end argues, virtually results in bondage. For good fruit of Karman can lead you to heaven for a time, but that is not the final destiny of the Self, as it returns inevitably to life as soon as its merit is exhausted.—And again, to one who really is a wise man, there is no need of ceremonial actions, because all action receives its consummation in wisdom. Outward Karman as such has no value, apart from the inward *knowledge*.*

(iii) The Gita Criticism of the Mimansa Actionism.

With this critical work, the Gītā develops its own *positive* theory of Karma-yoga. "It is a combination of *pravṛitti* or work and *nivṛitti* or withdrawal that the Gītā teaches." Absence of any attachment or hope of reward is the thing desirable and important in *inaction* and contribution to the realisation of the supreme—Spiritual perfection and Divine Service—is the essence of the *action* in its highest phases. Gītā combines these two half-truths and gives us its doctrine of "Disinterested Duty" or "Selfless Service." This is the (Karma-yoga† of the Gītā which is described by Gītā itself as "Perfection in

(iv) The Gita's Positive and Synthetic Theory of Karma-Yoga

* It is thus brought out that Karma-Yoga does not impugn knowledge (Jñāna). So also with Devotion; Karma-yoga includes Bhakti also.

† Tilak has proved that "Yoga" in the Gītā—unless expressly stated to the contrary—usually means Karma-yoga.

Works"—"योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्।" (ii. 50). In our own phraseology, Karma-yoga is the Perfection of the active nature of Man, just as the other Yogas, as we saw, are the perfection of the other sides of man's nature.

This, then, is the *form* of the Karma-yoga Ideal preached in the Gītā: "Perfection in Works." But where is the concrete *material* to fill it with?—In other words, what particular (sort of) actions does the Gītā prescribe? The answer to this question can be given in a phrase of Bradley's—"The Duties of one's station in life,"—duties of one's social function,—or in the words of the Gītā itself—"the Duties of one's Dharma." This implies a whole social philosophy (to enlarge upon which would take us longer than we have space here for). One's Dharma is determined by one's social function (Karman), which again is determined by one's capacity or aptitude *guṇa*. Culture, defence maintenance and service, as we said before, are the four main functions in a society and the persons who take up these are the four broad classes (*not* castes!) of the society. Doing the works of one's class – function — which is one's Dharma—is the higest duty of them. So, Oh Arjuna,—Krishna says in substance—do your prescribed work *niyata-karman*, in a selfless spirit and as a loving service to God. Spiritual perfection through Karman,—(Realisation of the supreme)—Perfection in activity lies essentially in observing this Dharma. As the Poet says—

(v) "Duties of One's Station in Life."

Do thy Duty; that is best.
Leave unto God all the rest.

10

We have now finished our survey of the three different aspects of the Ethical doctrine of the Gītā. In all these, we found that none can be kept aloof from the others. The

The Eudæmonistic Solidarity of the "Three Paths."

three together form one integral ethico-religious ideal of the Gītā. (Individual differences, as we have said, may lead to emphasis on this or that aspect of it.) To aim at the Highest—the Para or God,—in whatever we do, —in our knowledge, our love, our work, — and thus to perfect ourselves, to realise our " Selves " is the Ideal—ethical and religious—of the Gītā " Development and harmonious functioning of all the aspects of our nature "—this may be said to be the modern paraphrase of it. *Total* well-being—εὐδαιμονία—of man is the end of all our ethical effort and religious aspiration. *Total*, mark. All sides of man's nature will have fulfilment and none excluded or atrophied, — neither instinct nor intellect. A happy commonwealth of human nature—the *complete* personality of man will be realised and this is best done by regulating* all our functions and activities in the light of the Highest or God. The lower then becomes permeated by the Higher ; — (a virtual) inaction of the lower makes place for the action of the Higher ; — Man vacates for God ! Religion thus becomes the pole-star of ethical development and God and man meet ! ! and there remains only (the Law of) Pure Intuition and Fulfilment ! ! !

The practical philosophy (Ethics and Religion) of the Gītā will take much time and space for a complete presentation of it. The above is a very meagre attempt. But this must suffice for our purposes here. And now, looking once more at our Interpretation-table on the page 40, we see that our hypothesis there about the Ethics

* Gītā in its practical ethics has greatly emphasized the value of " Regulation. " Vide—e. g. (vi. 16-17) where this is brought out. This aspect of Gītā's teachings comes very near to the Doctrine of " Nothing-in-excess " in ancient Greek Philosophy. Also compare here the Platonic doctrine of " πέρας " (limit or regulation) in the *Philebus* and the Aristotelian doctrine of " μεσότες " (mean) in the Nichomachean Ethics.

of the Gītā has now been duly substantiated and ratified by our expository account of it given above. The Ethics of the Gītā are an Ethics of complete Personality and they combine both Pravṛitti (activism) and Nivṛitti (Quietism or asceticism) in a large synthesis of Eudæmonism ! *

* This term we owe originally to Plato and Aristotle. But in modern ethical literature, it unfortunatley had fallen under hedonistic misuse. It has been revived and brought into use again in its native innocence principally by Professor James Seth, in his " Ethical Principles. "

EPILOGUE

A General Conclusion

We thus see that the Gītā gives us a philosophical Synthesis—speculative and practical—which avoids and reconciles the partial formulations of the past. This is at least what is brought out by an objective and a historical study of the Gītā, as distinguished from an apologetic or a partisan exegesis of it. During the course of our study, we have also seen that the Gītā has already many philosophical ideas and conceptions which we find current in European philosophy to-day.

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4. A. Ghose—Essays on the Gītā.
5. R. Garbe—Introduction to the Gītā.
6. S. Tattvabhushan—Krishna and the Gītā.
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8. R. G. Bhandarkar—Vaishnavism, Śaivism and other Sects.
9. C. V. Vaidya—Epic India.
10. S. N. Dasgupta—A History of Indian Philosophy.
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ERRATA

[It is regretted that misprints should have remained in this book. The Important ones are corrected below.]

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
6	10	aud	and
7	8	away	a way
9	3 *from below omit*	(p. 436)	
10	2	a lower order "	a " lower order (p. 436)' "
13	2	negetivistic	negativistic
13	*Sevond Verse*	ब्रूहित मे	ब्रूहं तन्म
14	18	pointonly	point onl
16	7	of life	of life."
17	9	custormy	customary
18	16	eastward	westward
18	17	westward	eastward
19	11	latter	former
19	11	former	latter

23	27	strange, to find	strange to find,
24	27	of the matter).	of the matter *to be*)
24	28	to say *to be*	to say,
25	15	implies	imply
29	10	thics	ethics
29	16	—of.	of
31	II	fact.	facts.
34	8	principles	principles are
37	3 *from below*	is	in
38	6 *from below*	on	one's
39	5	importance	unimportance
41	14	preentation	presentation
43	6 *from below*	time.	time. "
44	22	representations	representation
47	16	nihils	nihilo
47	22	proportion	proposition
61	14	his views for	his views to the Gītā, for
68	14	Incarnation process	incarnation process ?
70	20	side	sole
70	26	" God. "	" Good. "
73	12	respecter of the	respecter of the personality of the
82	12	observed	absorbed
82	4 *from below*	vitiality	vitality
88	7 *from below*	(Karma-yoga	(Karma-) yoga
91	5	large	larger.

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